1868

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

GIFT OF

Dr. Kate Gordon Moore

# MODERN EGYPT

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

J. C. Beresford Phot. Emery Walker Ph. Sc.

Cromer

Evelyn Baring Cromer

# MODERN EGYPT

BY

THE EARL OF CROMER

*In his first interview with the Governor of St. Helena, Napoleon said emphatically: "Egypt is the most important country in the world."*

ROSE, *Life of Napoleon*, vol. i. p. 356.

*Earum proprie rerum sit historia, quibus rebus gerendis interfuerit is qui narret.*

GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, v. 18.

τὰ δ᾽ ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος πυνθανόμενος ἠξίωσα γράφειν, οὐδ᾽ ὡς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει, ἀλλ᾽ οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρῆν, καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἑκάστου ἐπεξελθών.

THUCYDIDES, i. 22.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE
VOL. I

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1916

*All rights reserved*

Copyright, 1908,
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1908. Reprinted April, May, August, 1908; January, 1909; March, 1916.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

# PREFACE

I AM wholly responsible for the contents of this book. It has no official character whatsoever.

CROMER.

LONDON,
*December* 31, 1907.

# EXPLANATORY NOTE

**P.T. 1** (Piastre Tariff) . = 2½d. = 26 centimes.
£E. 1 (Egyptian pound) . = P.T. 100 = £1 : 0 : 6 = 25·9 **fr.**
1 kantar . . . . . = 99·05 lbs. = about 45 kilog.
1 ardeb . . . . . = about 5½ bushels = 198 litres.
1 feddan . . . . . = 1·038 acres = about ·42 hectare.

(A feddan and an acre are so nearly equal that in this work the two measures have been considered equivalent.)

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

PAGE

Objects of this book—The narrative portion—The effects on Egypt of the British occupation—Chief point of interest in Egyptian reform—Difficulty of ascertaining Eastern opinion . . 1

## PART I

## ISMAIL PASHA

### 1863-1879

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOSCHEN MISSION

### NOVEMBER 1876

Financial position in 1863—And in 1876—Suspension of payment of Treasury Bills—Creation of the Commission of the Public Debt—Decree of May 7, 1876—The Goschen Mission—Decree of November 18, 1876—Appointment of Controllers-General—Sir Louis Mallet—I am appointed Commissioner of the Public Debt—Ismail's predecessors—Crisis in the career of Ismail Pasha—Accounts Department . . . . . 11

## CHAPTER III

### THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

### NOVEMBER 1876-APRIL 1878

Condition of Egypt—The law of the Moukábala—Petty taxes—The Egyptian public service—The fiscal system—Floating debt—

PAGE

Efforts to pay interest on the funded debt—Famine—The coupon of May 1, 1878—The Commissioners of the Debt—The Commission of Inquiry—The Khedive proposes a partial inquiry—The Commissioners decline to take part in it—The Khedive accepts a full inquiry . . . . . 29

CHAPTER IV

THE NUBAR-WILSON MINISTRY

APRIL 1878–NOVEMBER 1878

Difficulty of the task assigned to the Commission of Inquiry—Chérif Pasha declines to appear as a witness—Defects in the system of administration—The floating debt—The Rouznameh Loan—Loans from the Wakf and Beit-el-Mal Administrations—Ultimate reforms proposed by the Commissioners—Immediate reforms necessary—Enforcement of Ministerial responsibility—The Khedive's Civil List—Cession to the State of the Khedivial properties—The Khedive accepts the proposals of the Commissioners—Nubar Pasha forms a Ministry—Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières named Ministers—Loan authorised on the security of the Khedivial estates . . . . 46

CHAPTER V ✓

THE FALL OF NUBAR PASHA

NOVEMBER 1878–FEBRUARY 1879

Difficult position of the new Ministry—Support of the British and French Governments—The Khedive declines all responsibility—Convocation of the Chamber of Notables—The principle of Ministerial responsibility—Contest between the Khedive and Nubar Pasha—The Khedive intrigues against the Ministry—Mutiny of the officers—It is quelled by the Khedive—Nubar Pasha resigns—Immediate consequences—Remote consequences—State of discipline of the army—The Khedive's responsibility for the mutiny . . . . . 64

CHAPTER VI

THE COUP D'ÉTAT

APRIL 1879

Triumph achieved by Ismail Pasha—His parliamentary projects—Necessity of maintaining the reformed administration—

PAGE

Attempts to reinstate Nubar Pasha—Relations between the Khedive and the new Ministry—Position of the British and French Governments—Common policy—Different methods of executing the policy—Dissensions at Cairo—Position of Prince Tewfik—Mistaken principles of the new Ministry—The payment of the coupon on the 1864 loan—The Khedive prepares a separate financial scheme—Dismissal of the Ministers—Proposal to revive the Control—Letter of the Khedive to Chérif Pasha—Character of the new Ministers—Comments on the Khedive's proceedings . . . . . . 82

## CHAPTER VII

### The Report of the Commission

April 1879

Declaration of bankruptcy—Principles of the settlement—The Khedive's Civil List—The Ouchouri land-tax—The Rouznameh loan—The law of the Moukábala—Reductions of taxation—Composition with the creditors—Comments on the report—The Commissioners resign—The Khedive's counter-proposals—Revival of the practices of the old régime—The Commissioners of the Debt institute legal proceedings against the Egyptian Government—My departure from Egypt . . . 110

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Fall of Ismail Pasha

April–June 1879

Embarrassment of the European Powers—Turkey—England—France—Italy—Russia—Germany and Austria—The French and British Governments demand the reinstatement of the European Ministers—The Khedive declines to reinstate them—Question of re-establishing the Control—The German Government protest against the proceedings of the Khedive—The British and French Governments advise abdication—The Khedive appeals to the Sultan—The Sultan deposes the Khedive—Inauguration of Prince Tewfik—Ismail Pasha leaves Egypt—Remarks on his reign . . . . . 128

# PART II

# THE ARÁBI REVOLT

AUGUST 1879–AUGUST 1883

## CHAPTER IX

### THE INAUGURATION OF TEWFIK

AUGUST–NOVEMBER 1879

PAGE

State of the country—Chérif Pasha's Ministry—The Khedive assumes the Presidency of the Council—Ministry of Riaz Pasha—Relations between the Khedive and his Ministers—The Sultan cancels the Firman of 1873—Objections of France and England—The Mohammedan law of succession—The right to make Commercial Conventions, and to contract loans—The Army—The Khedive's investiture—Appointment of Controllers—Relations between the Government and the Controllers—Division of work between the Controllers—The Commission of Liquidation . . . . . . . 149

## CHAPTER X

### THE DUAL CONTROL

NOVEMBER 1879–DECEMBER 1880

Working of the Control—Relations between the two Controllers—And between the Controllers and the Egyptian Government—Delay in paying the Tribute—Interest on the Unified Debt paid at 4 per cent—Financial scheme proposed by the Controllers—The Budget for 1880—Reforms in the fiscal system—Confidence inspired by the Control—Reports on the state of the country—The Law of Liquidation—The military danger . 164

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MUTINY OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY

JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 1881

Discontent amongst the officers—They petition Riaz Pasha—Mutiny of February 1—Dismissal of the Minister of War—Imprudent conduct of the Khedive—Conduct of the French Consul-General—Increase of discontent in the army—Mutiny of September 9—Sir Auckland Colvin—Demands of the muti-

PAGE

neers—Dismissal of the Ministers—Reluctance of Chérif Pasha to accept office—Nomination of the Chérif Ministry—Chérif Pasha supports the European Control—Arábi is the real ruler of Egypt—His conduct due to fear—Situation created by the mutiny . . . . . . . . 175

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CHÉRIF MINISTRY

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1881

The Porte wishes to interfere—Objections of France and England—Despatch of Turkish Commissioners to Cairo—Effect of their mission—British and French ships sent to Alexandria—Arábi leaves Cairo with his regiment—Remarks on Turkish interference—Divergent views of France and England—Despondency of the Khedive—Chérif Pasha's policy—Sir Auckland Colvin's views—Arábi's policy—Insubordination in the army—Violence of the local press—Attitude of the civil population—Summary of the situation at the end of 1881 . . . 194

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE JOINT NOTE

JANUARY 1882

Proposal to establish an Anglo-French Military Control—Change of Ministry in France—M. Gambetta proposes joint action—Lord Granville agrees—Sir Edward Malet consulted—Sir Auckland Colvin's recommendations—M. Gambetta prepares a draft note—Lord Granville agrees—Instructions sent to Cairo—Proposed increase in the army—Reorganisation of the Chamber of Notables—Effect produced by the Note—Remarks on the Note . . . . . . . . 214

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE EFFECTS OF THE JOINT NOTE

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1882

The British Government wish to explain the Joint Note—The French Government object—The Chamber of Notables claims the right to vote the Budget—Proposals of the British Government—Objections of the French Government—The Consuls-General instructed to oppose the Chamber—The Chamber

PAGE

demands a change of Ministry—Appointment of a National Ministry—The French Government press for an Anglo-French occupation—The British Government favour a Turkish occupation—Resignation of M. Gambetta—Remarks on his policy . 236

## CHAPTER XV

### THE ARÁBI MINISTRY

FEBRUARY–MAY 1882

Proposal to revise the Organic Law—Mr. Wilfrid Blunt—M. de Blignières resigns—Concessions made to the army—Disorganisation in the provinces—The Porte protests against the Joint Note—The Powers are invited to an exchange of views—M. de Freycinet wishes to depose the Khedive—Lord Granville proposes to send Financial Commissioners to Egypt—Alleged conspiracy to murder Arábi—The Ministers resign, but resume office—M. de Freycinet assents to Turkish intervention—Arábi requested to leave Egypt—He refuses to do so—The Ministers again resign—The Khedive reinstates Arábi—And asks for a Turkish Commissioner . . . . . . . 254

APPENDIX.—Note on the relations between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt . . . . . . . 279

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

MAY–JULY 1882

State of the country—Vacillation of the Porte—A Conference proposed—Dervish Pasha and Essad Effendi sent to Egypt—The Alexandria massacres—Failure of Dervish Pasha's Mission—Panic in Egypt—The Conference meets—The Ragheb Ministry—The British Admiral demands that the construction of batteries at Alexandria shall cease—The French decline to co-operate—The bombardment of Alexandria—The town abandoned and burnt . . . . . . . 281

## CHAPTER XVII

### TEL-EL-KEBIR

JULY–SEPTEMBER 1882

State of the country—British policy—Vote of credit—Negotiations with France—Fall of the Freycinet Ministry—France declines to co-operate—Negotiations with Italy—Italy declines to

PAGE

co-operate—Negotiations with Turkey—Tel-el-Kebir—General remarks . . . . . . . . 300

## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Dufferin Mission

### September 1882–August 1883

British policy—Trial of Arábi—Resignation of Riaz Pasha—Exile of political prisoners—Courts-martial—The Alexandria Indemnities — The abolition of the Dual Control — Rupture of the Anglo-French understanding — Lord Dufferin's Report — My arrival in Egypt . . . . . . . 331

# PART III

# THE SOUDAN

### 1882–1907

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Hicks Expedition

### January–November 1883

Extent of Egyptian territory — Misgovernment in the Soudan — Slave-hunting—Said Pasha's views—Colonel Stewart's Report —The Mahdi—Military and financial situation—Interference from Cairo—Attitude of the British Government—Destruction of General Hicks's army . . . . . . . 349

## CHAPTER XX

### The Abandonment of the Soudan

### November 1883–January 1884

My position — I press the British Government to depart from a passive attitude — Lord Granville's reply — The Egyptian Government decide to hold Khartoum — Colonel Coetlogon recommends a retreat on Berber — Opinions of the military authorities at Cairo — The Egyptian Government wish to invoke the aid of the Sultan — The British Government recommend withdrawal from the Soudan — The Egyptian Ministers resign—Nubar Pasha takes office—Observations on the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan . . . . 371

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE REBELLION IN THE EASTERN SOUDAN

AUGUST 1883–MARCH 1884

PAGE

Prevailing discontent—Annihilation of a force sent to Sinkat—And of one sent to Tokar—Defeat of the Egyptians at Tamanieb—It is decided to send the Gendarmerie and some black troops under Zobeir Pasha to Suakin—Instructions to General Baker—He arrives at Suakin—His instructions are modified—Zobeir Pasha retained at Cairo—General Baker advances to Tokar—His defeat—Fall of Sinkat—It is decided to send a British force to Tokar—Fall of Tokar—General Graham advances—Action at El Teb—The British troops return to Suakin—Battle of Tamai—Results of the operations . . . . . 396

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE GORDON MISSION

DECEMBER 1883–JANUARY 1884

The situation in Egypt—Sir Frederick Stephenson—General Earle—Sir Edgar Vincent—Sir Evelyn Wood—Foreign Office support—First and second proposals to send General Gordon—They are rejected—Third proposal to send General Gordon—It is accepted—No British officer should have been sent to Khartoum—General Gordon should not in any case have been chosen—The responsibility of the British press—And of the British Government—General Gordon's optimism—My regret at having assented to the Gordon Mission . . . 417

## CHAPTER XXIII

### GORDON AT CAIRO

JANUARY 24–26, 1884

General Gordon wishes to go to Suakin—He goes to Cairo—Consequences which resulted from the change of route—General Gordon's views as to the Soudan—His London instructions—Instructions issued at Cairo—General Gordon appointed Governor-General of the Soudan—And furnished with certain Proclamations—Reasons why General Gordon's instructions were changed—The Darfour Sultan—General Gordon proposes that Zobeir Pasha should accompany him—Interview between General Gordon and Zobeir Pasha—It is decided not to employ Zobeir Pasha—General Gordon leaves Cairo . . . 440

## CHAPTER XXIV

### GORDON'S JOURNEY TO KHARTOUM

JANUARY 26–FEBRUARY 18, 1884

PAGE

Contradictory nature of General Gordon's proposals—The Darfour Sultan—General Gordon proposes to visit the Mahdi—Or to retire to the Equator—He issues a Proclamation announcing the independence of the Soudan—The Slavery Proclamation—General Gordon arrives at Khartoum—He is sanguine of success—Colonel Stewart's warning . . . . . 461

## CHAPTER XXV

### ZOBEIR PASHA

FEBRUARY 18–MARCH 16, 1884

The turning-point of General Gordon's Mission—General Gordon's Memorandum of February 8—Change in General Gordon's views—He asks for Zobeir Pasha—I advise that Zobeir Pasha should be General Gordon's successor—The Government reject this proposal—General Gordon proposes to "smash up" the Mahdi—Conflicting policies advocated by General Gordon—His Proclamation stating that British troops were coming to Khartoum—General Gordon's neglect of his instructions—I again urge the employment of Zobeir Pasha—Difficulty of understanding General Gordon's telegrams—Colonel Stewart recommends that Zobeir Pasha should be sent—I support this view—General Gordon recommends that the Berber-Suakin route should be opened—The Government object to the employment of Zobeir Pasha—I again urge the employment of Zobeir Pasha—General Gordon's communications to the *Times* correspondent—The tribes round Khartoum waver—The Government reject the Zobeir proposal—I instruct General Gordon to hold on to Khartoum—I again urge on the Government the necessity of employing Zobeir Pasha—The proposal is rejected—I remonstrate—Final rejection of the Zobeir proposal—Were the Government right in their decision? 479

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE PROPOSED DASH TO BERBER

MARCH 16–APRIL 21, 1884

Sir Gerald Graham proposes to move on Sinkat—Lord Granville approves—The proposed movement on Wadi Halfa—Proposal

PAGE

to send a British expedition to Berber—It is rejected—The order to move on Sinkat is cancelled—Remarks on this decision—Proposal to despatch a force to Wadi Halfa—General Gordon recommends the employment of a Turkish force—The Government reject the proposal—Necessity of preparing for a Relief Expedition . . . . . . . 535

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE RELIEF EXPEDITION

April 21-October 5, 1884

General Gordon's motives—Spirit in which the question should be approached—Did General Gordon try to carry out the policy of the Government?—The situation at Berber—Messages to General Gordon and his replies—Sir Frederick Stephenson instructed to report on the Relief Expedition—The Suakin-Berber Railway—The fall of Berber—The vote of credit—Lord Wolseley appointed to command the Nile expedition—He arrives at Wadi Halfa—Remarks on the above narrative . . . 559

APPENDIX.—Note on the Khedive's telegram to General Gordon of September 14, 1884 . . . . . . 593

---

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY G. C. BERESFORD . . . . . . *Frontispiece*

MAP OF THE SOUDAN . . . . *At the end of Volume*

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

**Objects of this book—The narrative portion—The effects on Egypt of the British occupation—Chief point of interest in Egyptian reform —Difficulty of ascertaining Eastern opinion.**

My object in writing this book is twofold.

In the first place, I wish to place on record an accurate narrative of some of the principal events which have occurred in Egypt and in the Soudan since the year 1876.[1]

In the second place, I wish to explain the results which have accrued to Egypt from the British occupation of the country in 1882.

The accidents of my public life have afforded me special opportunities for compiling certain chapters of Egyptian history. From March 1877 to June 1880, and again from September 1883 up to the present time (1907), I have been behind the scenes of Egyptian affairs. Besides those sources of information which are open to all the world, I have had access to all the documents in the archives of the Foreign Offices of both London and Cairo, and I have been in close communication with, I think, almost every one who has taken a leading part in Egyptian affairs during the period the history of which I have attempted to write. Thus, I think I may fairly lay claim to be in a position of exceptional advantage in so far as the attainment of accuracy is concerned.

---

[1] I have dealt fully and unreservedly with the whole of the principal historical events which occurred in Egypt from 1876 up to the time of Tewfik Pasha's death (January 7, 1892); also with Soudan history up to the end of 1907. It would, in my opinion, be premature to deal similarly with events in Egypt subsequent to the accession of the present Khedive.

Now, accuracy of statement is a great merit. Sir Arthur Helps once said that half the evils of the world come from inaccuracy. My personal experience would lead me rather to agree with him. I cannot say that what I have seen and known of contemporaneous events, with which I have been well acquainted, has inspired me with any great degree of confidence in the accuracy of historical writing. The public, indeed, generally end, though sometimes not till after a considerable lapse of time, in getting a correct idea of the general course of events, and of the cause or effect of any special political incident. But, speaking more particularly of the British public, it may be doubted whether even this result is fully achieved, save in respect to questions of internal policy. In such matters, a number of competent and well-informed persons take part in the discussions which arise in Parliament and in the press. Inaccuracy of statement is speedily corrected. Fallacies are exposed. In the heat of party warfare the truth may for a time be obscured, but in the end the public will generally lay hold of a tolerably correct appreciation of the facts.

In dealing with the affairs of a foreign country, more especially if that country be in a semi-civilised condition, these safeguards to historical truth exist in a relatively less degree. English opinion has in such cases to deal with a condition of society with which it is unfamiliar. It is disposed to apply arguments drawn from English, or, it may be, from European experience to a state of things which does not admit of any such arguments being applied without great qualifications. The number of persons who possess sufficiently accurate information to instruct the public is limited, and amongst those persons it not unfrequently happens that many have some particular cause to advance, or some favourite political theory to defend. Those who are most qualified to speak often occupy some official position, which, for the time being, imposes silence upon them. There is, therefore, no certain guarantee that inaccuracies of statement will be corrected, or that fallacies will be adequately exposed. Thus, even if the general conclusion be correct, there is a risk that an erroneous appreciation in respect to important matters of detail will float down the tide of history. The public often seize on some incident which strikes the popular imagination, or idealise the character of some individual whose action excites sympathy or admiration. It would appear, indeed, that democracy tends to develop rather than to discourage hero-worship.

The first stage on the road to historical inaccuracy is that some half-truth is stated, and, in spite of contradiction, obtains a certain amount of credence. It may be, indeed, that the error is corrected; but it sometimes happens that, as time goes on, the measure of fiction increases, whilst that of fact tends to evaporate. A series of myths cluster round the original idea or statement. In India, as Sir Alfred Lyall has shown, the hero passes by easy stages of transition into a demi-god.[1] In sceptical Europe, the process is different. All that happens is that an incorrect fact or a faulty conclusion is graven into the tablets from which future historians must draw their sources of information.

Turning to the second point to which allusion is made above, I wish to explain the results which accrued to Egypt from the British occupation of the country in 1882.

---

[1] *Asiatic Studies.*

On March 23, 1876, Mr. Stephen Cave, who had been sent to Cairo to report on the financial condition of Egypt, expressed himself in the following terms:—

> Egypt may be said to be in a transition state, and she suffers from the defects of the system out of which she is passing, as well as from those of the system into which she is attempting to enter. She suffers from the ignorance, dishonesty, waste, and extravagance of the East, such as have brought her suzerain to the verge of ruin, and at the same time from the vast expense caused by hasty and inconsiderate endeavours to adopt the civilisation of the West.

An attempt will be made in the following pages to give some account of the measures adopted since Mr. Cave wrote his report, to arrest, and, as I hope and would fain believe, to remedy the disease, whose main features are described with accuracy in the passage quoted above.

I trust that such an account will not be devoid of interest to the general reader, and that it will be of some special interest to those of my fellow-countrymen who are, or who at some future time may be engaged in Oriental administration. It is to this latter class that I would more especially address myself, for they can appreciate the nature of the problems which have presented themselves for solution, and the difficulty of solving them, more fully than those who are devoid of special administrative experience in the East.

I would at the outset state where, as I venture to think, the chief point of interest lies.

Egypt is not the only country which has been brought to the verge of ruin by a persistent neglect of economic laws and by a reckless administration of the finances of the State. Neither is it the only country in which undue privileges have been acquired by the influential classes to the detriment of the mass of the population. Nor is it the only country in whose administration the most elementary principles of law and justice have been ignored. Although the details may differ, there is a great similarity in the general character of the abuses which spring up under Eastern Governments wheresoever they may be situated. So also, although the remedies to be applied must vary according to local circumstances and according to the character, institutions, and habits of thought of the European nation under whose auspices reforms are initiated, the broad lines which those reforms must take are traced out by the commonplace requirements of European civilisation, and must of necessity present some identity of character, whether the scene of action be India, Algiers, Egypt, Tunis, or Bosnia.

The history of reform in Egypt, therefore, does not present any striking feature to which some analogy might not perhaps be found in other countries where European civilisation has, in a greater or less degree, been grafted on a backward Eastern Government and society.

But, so far as I am aware, no counterpart can be found to the special circumstances which have attended the work of Egyptian reform. Those circumstances have, in truth, been very peculiar.

In the first place, one alien race, the English, have had to control and guide a second alien race, the Turks, by whom they are disliked, in the government of a third race, the Egyptians. To these latter, both the paramount races are to a certain extent unsympathetic. In the case of the Turks, the want of sympathy has been mitigated by habit, by a common religion, and by the use of a common language.[1] In the case of the English, it has been mitigated by the respect due to superior talents, and by the benefits which have accrued to the population from British interference.

---

[1] All the Egyptian officials of Turkish origin now speak Arabic.

In the second place, it is to be observed that for diplomatic and other reasons, on which it is unnecessary for the moment to dwell, the Egyptian administration had to be reformed without any organic changes being effected in the conditions under which the government had been conducted prior to the British occupation. Those conditions were of an exceptionally complicated character. A variety of ingenious and elaborate checks had been invented with a view to preventing a bad Government from moving in a vicious direction. These checks, when brought into action under a wholly different condition of affairs, were at times applied, under the baneful impulse of international jealousy, to hamper the movements of an improved Government in the direction of reform. "Je suis sans crédit," said the "plumitif" in Voltaire's *Ingénu*, "pour faire du bien; mon pouvoir se borne à faire du mal quelquefois." The phrase may rightly be applied to the working of international government in Egypt since 1882. It is, indeed, certain that whatever success has attended the efforts of reformers in Egypt has been attained, not in virtue of the system, but in spite of it. Those who hold, with the English poet, that "Whate'er is best administered is best," may perhaps find some corroboration of their theory in the recent history of Egypt. An experiment under somewhat novel conditions has, in fact, been made in Eastern administration, and, in spite of many shortcomings, this experiment has been crowned with a certain degree of success. It is this which gives to Egyptian reform its chief claim to the interest of the political student.

I have lived too long in the East not to be aware that it is difficult for any European to arrive at a true estimate of Oriental wishes, aspirations, and opinions.

> Those who have been in the East and have tried to mingle with the native population know well how utterly impossible it is for the European to look at the world with the same eyes as the Oriental. For a while, indeed, the European may fancy that he and the Oriental understand one another, but sooner or later a time comes when he is suddenly awakened from his dream, and finds himself in the presence of a mind which is as strange to him as would be the mind of an inhabitant of Saturn.[1]

I was for some while in Egypt before I fully realised how little I understood my subject; and I found, to the last day of my residence in the country, that I was constantly learning something new. No casual visitor can hope to obtain much real insight into the true state of native opinion. Divergence of religion and habits of thought; in my own case ignorance of the vernacular language;[2] the reticence of Orientals when speaking to any one in authority; their tendency to agree with any one to whom they may be talking; the want of mental symmetry and precision, which is the chief distinguishing feature between the illogical and picturesque East and the logical West, and which lends such peculiar interest to the study of Eastern life and politics; the fact that religion enters to a greater extent than in Europe into the social life and laws and customs of the people; and the further fact that the European and the Oriental, reasoning from the same premises, will often arrive at diametrically opposite conclusions,—all these circumstances place the European at a great disadvantage when he attempts to gauge Eastern opinion. Nevertheless, the difficulty of arriving at a true idea of the undercurrents of native opinion is probably less considerable in Egypt than in India. Notably, the absence of the caste system, and the fact that the social and religious fabric of Islamism is more readily comprehensible to the European mind than the comparatively subtle and mystical bases of Hinduism, diminish the gulf which in India separates the European from the native, and which, by placing a check on social intercourse, becomes a fertile source of mutual misunderstanding. On the whole, though I should not like to dogmatise on the subject, I am inclined to think that by constantly seeing people of all classes, and by checking the information received from different sources, a fair idea of native opinion in Egypt may in time be formed.

---

[1] Professor Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 558.

[2] I have a fair acquaintance with Turkish, but I do not speak Arabic.

I would add that it is not possible to live so long as I have lived in Egypt without acquiring a deep sympathy for the Egyptian people. The cause of Egyptian reform is one in which I take the warmest personal interest. A residence of half a lifetime in Eastern countries has made me realise the force of Rudyard Kipling's lines—

> If you've heard the East a'calling,
> You won't ever heed aught else.

# PART I

# ISMAIL PASHA

## 1863–1879

*It were good that men in their Innovations would follow the example of Time itself, which, indeed, innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived. . . . It is good also not to try experiments in States except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident; and well to beware that it be the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation.*

BACON, *On Innovations.*

*It is singular how long the rotten will hold together provided you do not handle it roughly . . . so loth are men to quit their old ways; and conquering indolence and inertia, venture on new. . . . Rash enthusiast of change, beware! Hast thou well considered all that Habit does in this life of ours?*

CARLYLE, *French Revolution.*

# CHAPTER II

## THE GOSCHEN MISSION

November 1876

Financial position in 1863—And in 1876—Suspension of payment of Treasury Bills—Creation of the Commission of the Public Debt—Decree of May 7, 1876—The Goschen Mission—Decree of November 18, 1876—Appointment of Controllers-General—Sir Louis Mallet—I am appointed Commissioner of the Public Debt—Ismail's predecessors—Crisis in the career of Ismail Pasha—Accounts Department.

THE origin of the Egyptian Question in its present phase was financial.

In 1863, when Said Pasha died, the public debt of Egypt amounted to £3,293,000. Said Pasha was succeeded by Ismail Pasha, the son of the celebrated Ibrahim Pasha, and the grandson of the still more celebrated Mehemet Ali.

In 1876, the funded debt of Egypt, including the Daira loans, amounted to £68,110,000. In addition to this, there was a floating debt of about £26,000,000.

Roughly speaking, it may be said that Ismail Pasha added, on an average, about £7,000,000 a year for thirteen years to the debt of Egypt. For all practical purposes it may be said that the whole of the borrowed money, except £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, was squandered.[1]

---

[1] Mr. Cave, after making out a balance-sheet for the years from 1864 to 1875, adds: "Two striking features stand out in this balance-sheet, namely, that the sum raised by revenue, £94,281,401, is little

For some while prior to the general breakdown, it had been apparent that Ismail Pasha's reckless administration of the finances of the country must, sooner or later, bring about a financial collapse. Towards the latter part of 1875 and the beginning of 1876, money was raised at ruinous rates of interest by the issue of Treasury bills. On April 8, 1876, the crash came. The Khedive suspended payment of his Treasury bills.

Previous to the suspension of payment, some discussion had taken place with reference to the creation of an Egyptian National Bank, which was to be under the control of three European Commissioners. France and Italy each agreed to select a Commissioner, but Lord Derby, who then presided at the Foreign Office, was unwilling to interfere in the internal affairs of Egypt, and declined to nominate a British Commissioner.

The project, therefore, dropped, but was shortly afterwards revived in a different form. On May 2, 1876, a Khedivial Decree was issued instituting a Commission of the Public Debt. Certain specific duties were assigned to the Commissioners, who were to act generally as representatives of the bondholders. On May 7, a further Decree was issued consolidating the debt of Egypt, which then amounted to £91,000,000.

M. de Blignières, Herr von Kremer, a distinguished Orientalist, and M. Baravelli were nominated to be Commissioners of the Debt at the instance, respectively, of the French, Austrian, and Italian Governments. The British Government declined to select a Commissioner.

less than that spent on administration, tribute to the Porte, works of unquestionable utility, and certain expenses of questionable utility or policy, in all amounting to £97,240,966, and that for the present large amount of indebtedness there is absolutely nothing to show but the Suez Canal, the whole proceeds of the loans and floating debt having been absorbed in payment of interest and sinking funds, with the exception of the sum debited to that great work."

The financial arrangements embodied in the Decree of May 7, 1876, caused much dissatisfaction, especially in England, with the result that Mr. (subsequently Lord) Goschen undertook a mission to Egypt with a view to obtaining some modifications which the bondholders considered necessary.

Lord Goschen, with whom M. Joubert was associated to represent French interests, arrived in Egypt in October 1876.

The arrangement negotiated by Messrs. Goschen and Joubert was embodied in a Decree, dated November 18, 1876. The chief financial features of this arrangement were as follows:—

The loans of 1864, 1865, and 1867, which had been contracted before the financial position of the Khedive had become seriously embarrassed, and the capital of which amounted in all to about £4,293,000, were taken out of the Unified Debt, into which they had been incorporated under the Decree of May 7, and formed the subject of a special arrangement.

A 5 per cent Preference Stock, intended to attract *bona-fide* investors, was created, with a capital of £17,000,000.

The Daira debts, amounting to about £8,815,000, which had, under the Decree of May 7, been included in the Unified Debt, were again deducted, and ultimately formed the subject of a separate arrangement.

The capital of the Unified Debt was thus reduced to £59,000,000. The rate of interest was fixed at 6 per cent, to which a sinking fund of 1 per cent was added.

So far as the effect produced on the future of Egypt was concerned, the purely financial arrangements negotiated by Lord Goschen were less productive of result than the changes which, under his advice, the Khedive introduced into the administration of the country. It was clear that, however rational any Egyptian financial combination might be, it would present but little hope of stability unless the fiscal administration of the country was improved. It was, therefore, decided to appoint two Controllers-General, one of whom was to supervise the revenue, and the other the expenditure. The railways and the port of Alexandria, the revenues of which were to be applied to the payment of interest on the Preference Stock, were to be administered by a Board composed of two Englishmen, a Frenchman, and two Egyptians.

Mr. Romaine was appointed Controller-General of the Revenue and the Baron de Malaret Controller-General of Expenditure. General Marriott was appointed President of the Railway Board. Lord Derby instructed Lord Vivian, who was at this time British representative in Egypt, to inform the Khedive that "Her Majesty's Government could not accept any responsibility for these appointments, to which, however, they had no objection to offer."

About the same time, the Khedive applied to Lord Goschen to nominate an English Commissioner of the Public Debt, the British Government having again declined to assume the responsibility of nomination.

In May 1876, I returned from India, where I had for four years occupied the post of Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Northbrook. I had, in connection with Indian affairs, been brought much in contact with the late Sir Louis Mallet, who was then Under-Secretary of State at the India Office.

I cannot pass by the mention of Sir Louis Mallet's name without paying a tribute of respect to his memory. To myself his death was an irreparable loss. Whenever I visited England during the last few years of his life, I always discussed with him the difficulties of the situation in which I was placed in Egypt. They were at one time very great. Sir Louis Mallet was not personally acquainted with the details of Egyptian affairs, but, besides the intimate knowledge which he possessed of economic science, of which he had made a special study, his high-minded attachment to principle and his keen insight into the forces in motion in the political world rendered his advice of the utmost value. He was the best type of the English civil servant; a keen politician but not a political partisan, a trained official without a trace of the bureaucratic element in him, and a man of really liberal aspirations without being carried away by the catchwords which sometimes attach themselves to what, from a party point of view, is called liberal policy in England.

Lord Goschen consulted Sir Louis Mallet as to whom he should nominate as Commissioner of the Debt in Egypt. Sir Louis Mallet recommended me. Lord Goschen offered me the post, which I accepted. I arrived in Egypt on March 2, 1877.

I would here pause in order to make some observations which are suggested by these appointments.

This period constituted the turning-point of Ismail Pasha's career. The system of government which existed in Egypt during the pre-reforming days was very defective, but it possessed some barbaric virtues, and was perhaps more suited to the country than Europeans, judging from their own standpoint, are often disposed to admit.

The manufacturers of myths have, of course, been at work at Mehemet Ali's career. They often credit him with ideas and intentions which were absolutely foreign to his nature. Nevertheless, the Egyptians are right to venerate the memory of this rough man of genius, if only for the reason that to him belongs the credit of having amputated their country from the decaying body of the Ottoman Empire, thus giving it a separate administrative existence. Moreover, there was much in Mehemet Ali's character which was really worthy of admiration. He was a brave and capable soldier. He had some statesmanlike instincts, and, though his lights were rude, nevertheless he used them to the best of his ability in furthering the interests of his adopted country, as he understood those interests. He proceeded tentatively along the path of reform. He summoned to Egypt a few Europeans, mostly Frenchmen, of high professional merit.[1] He founded the Polytechnic School, the School of Medicine, and some other similar institutions. Under the direction of M. Jumel, the cotton plant was introduced into the country.

Sir John Bowring, in a report addressed to Lord Palmerston in 1840, said :—[2]

---

[1] One of the predominating ideas in Mehemet Ali's mind was to use French as a counterpoise to British influence in Egypt, not because he had any particular love for the French or dislike of the English, but because, with the instinct of a true statesman, he foresaw that the force of circumstances might, and probably would drive England into an aggressive policy against Egypt. Mr. Cameron (*Egypt in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 105) says that when the celebrated traveller, Burckhardt, visited Egypt in 1814, Mehemet Ali "asked him about England and our plans in the East. He dreaded lest Wellington should invade Egypt with the Peninsular Army. 'The great fish swallow the small,' he said; 'I am afraid of the English, and hope they will not attack Egypt in my absence. . . . England must some day take Egypt as her share of the spoil of the Turkish Empire.'"

[2] The whole of this report, which is but little known, is well worthy of perusal by any one who takes an interest in Egyptian affairs. The history of the early part of Mehemet Ali's reign has been written by a contemporary, Sheikh Abdul-Rahman el-Jabarti. The Sheikh wrote from a strongly Egyptian, that is to say anti-Turkish point of view.

> Egypt has, indeed, received immense benefit from the presence of Europeans. They have not only rendered direct services by the knowledge they have communicated, but the circumstance of their having been so much associated with all the improvements which have been introduced has diffused a great respect for their superior acquirements, and a toleration for their opinions, whose influence has been spreading widely among the people.

But, although Mehemet Ali dallied with European civilisation in a manner which was by no means unintelligent and was far less hurtful to his country than that adopted by Said and Ismail, his methods of government were, in reality, wholly Oriental. Those methods may be illustrated by the following anecdote, which I give on the authority of Nubar Pasha.

At the beginning of the war which Mehemet Ali waged against the Porte, the Admiral in command of the Turkish Fleet in Egyptian waters, who was a man of noted courage and ability, was summoned to Constantinople. He probably had more to gain than to lose by deserting the Egyptian cause. He decided, however, to throw in his lot with Mehemet Ali. His decision contributed materially to the eventual victory of Egypt. After the war was over, the Admiral was again summoned to Constantinople. To have obeyed at that time would have meant certain death. The Admiral, therefore, remained at Cairo, and, for four years, enjoyed Mehemet Ali's protection, which he had so well deserved. At the end of that period—whether it was that Mehemet Ali wished to ingratiate himself with the Sultan, who continued to press his request, or whether he had for other

---

He does justice to Mehemet Ali's military qualities, but he gives an unfavourable account of the condition of the country and of the system of government adopted during Mehemet Ali's time. See also St. John's *Egypt under Mohammed Ali*, published in 1834, and Cameron's *Egypt in the Nineteenth Century*, 1898.

reasons become estranged from the Admiral—he determined to withdraw his protection. He sent one of his confidential agents to visit the Admiral. A short conversation, which it would be difficult to rival in pathos and dramatic effect, ensued. The agent, after the usual Oriental compliments, merely said, 'Life, O Admiral, is uncertain. We must all be prepared to meet our death at any moment." The Admiral at once took the hint. He knew what those fatal words meant. The tenets of his religion had taught him not to resist the decrees of fate. Like many a Stoic philosopher of Ancient Rome, he had probably at times reflected that a self-inflicted death was, as a last resource, a sure refuge from earthly tyranny and injustice, however galling. He merely asked for time to say his prayers, and, when these were completed, drank, without complaint or remonstrance, the poisoned cup of coffee which was offered to him. On the following day, it was announced that he had died suddenly of apoplexy.

Ibrahim, the son and successor of Mehemet Ali, was a distinguished soldier, and a man of great personal courage. It must be added that he was a half-lunatic savage. He it was who commanded the expedition sent to Nejd against the Wahabis. A number of orthodox Mollahs accompanied the expedition. When the military operations had been terminated by the success of the Egyptian arms, Ibrahim arranged that his Mollahs and the religious leaders of the Wahabi sect should meet and discuss the dogmatic and ceremonial points of difference which separated them. After the lapse of three days, Ibrahim inquired what had been the result of their discussions. He was informed that neither party had been able to convert the other to its special views. Ibrahim then said that under the circumstances, although he was no theologian, he must decide the matter for himself. He ordered all the religious leaders of the Wahabi sect to be killed.[1]

Nubar Pasha once related to me an episode in his relations with Ibrahim, which did great credit to his own remarkable conversational powers. He and others were on board a steamer, which was conveying Ibrahim and his suite from Constantinople to Egypt. On nearing Alexandria, Nubar learnt that Ibrahim had suddenly decided that the members of his suite, including Nubar himself, should be thrown overboard. Thereupon, Nubar went to Ibrahim's cabin, entirely ignored the fate which awaited himself and his comrades, and began to talk to Ibrahim of his campaigns. Ibrahim was so much pleased at the flattery which was abundantly administered to him, and also so much interested in all that Nubar said, that for the moment he forgot his recent decision. The conversation continued until the ship arrived at Alexandria. Thus, Nubar and his companions were saved.

Ibrahim died, very shortly after his accession, of pneumonia, brought on, it is said, by drinking two bottles of highly iced champagne at a draught when he was very hot.[2]

Abbas, the next Khedive, was an Oriental despot of the worst type. The stories of his revolting cruelty are endless. There does not appear, as in the case of his predecessors, to have been any redeeming feature in his character. It was altogether odious.

---

[1] Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, vol. ii. p. 58.

[2] Mr. Pickthall, writing of Ibrahim Pasha's administration of Syria, says: "The radicalism of Ibrahim made his rule offensive to the conservative notables of Syria. Still, he was the kind of tyrant to appeal most strongly to Orientals, heavy-handed but humorous, knowing how to impart to his decisions that quaint proverbial savour which dwells in the mind of the people, and makes good stories; and his fame among the fellaheen is that of a second Solomon."—*Folk-Lore of the Holy Land*, Preface, p. xvi.

My earliest connection with Egyptian affairs was, as a child, being one of a large crowd waiting in St. James's Park to see Ibrahim Pasha pass. This must have been in 1846 or 1847. The Londoners called him "Abraham Parker."

The main defects of Said Pasha, who succeeded Abbas, were excessive vanity and hopeless incapacity in the art of government. His follies were duly chronicled by Mr. Senior, who visited Egypt during his reign. Although less ferocious than his immediate predecessor, he occasionally committed acts which would be considered extremely cruel, had their iniquity not been outrivalled by the deeds of Abbas.

I hesitate to relate the numerous stories which have been handed down to posterity about Abbas and Said. At this distance of time, it is almost impossible to say how far they are true, and inasmuch as most of them bring out the characters of both of these princes in a highly unpleasant light, it is merely an act of posthumous justice to their memories not to relate them, unless their truth can be substantiated by absolutely trustworthy evidence. The following, however, supposing it to be true—and it is not at all improbable—is relatively innocuous, and, moreover, is so highly illustrative of the manner in which Oriental despots occasionally jump from an extreme of injustice to a prodigality of generous munificence that I need not refrain from relating it. On one occasion, Said was coming in a steamer from the Barrage to Cairo. The Nile was low, and the steamer stuck in the mud. Said ordered the *reis* (steersman) to receive a hundred blows with the courbash. These were administered. The steamer was got off the mud, and proceeded on her journey. Shortly afterwards, she stuck again. Said roared out: "Give him two hundred," whereupon the unfortunate *reis* made a rush, and jumped overboard. A boat was put off, and he was brought back to the steamer. Said asked him why he had jumped overboard. The man explained that he preferred to run the risk of death by drowning to the agony caused by another flogging. "Fool," exclaimed Said, "when I said two hundred, I did not mean lashes, but sovereigns." And, accordingly, the man received a bag containing that amount of money. Eastern history abounds with episodes of this sort. Moreover, the minds of Orientals are so peculiarly constituted that many of them would probably be far more struck with the generosity of the gift than with the cruelty and injustice of the flogging.

Said occasionally indulged in the most insane freaks. Thus, in order to prove his courage, which had been called in question by the European press, it is said that he caused a kilometre of road to be strewn a foot deep with gunpowder. He then walked solemnly along the road smoking a pipe, and accompanied by a numerous suite, all of whom were ordered to smoke,—severe penalties being threatened against any one whose pipe was not found alight at the end of the promenade.

It was Said who first invited European adventurers to prey on Egypt. Nubar Pasha, who could speak with authority on this subject, used to say: "C'est au temps de Said que le commencement de la débâcle a eu lieu." Intelligent observers on the spot were already able to foretell the storm which was eventually to burst over Egypt. In 1855, Mr. Walne, the British Consul at Cairo, said to Mr. Senior:—

> Said Pasha is rash and flighty and conceited, and is spoilt by the flattery of the foreigners who surround him. They tell him, and he believes them, that he is a universal genius. He undoes everything, does very little, and, I fear, is preparing for us some great catastrophe.[1]

---

[1] Senior's *Conversations and Journals in Egypt*, vol. i. p. 181. An account of Egypt under Said Pasha is given in Dr. Stacquey's work published in 1865, and entitled *L'Égypte, La Basse Nubie et le Sinai*

These, and many other similar anecdotes which might be related, serve to illustrate the methods of government which prevailed in Egypt immediately prior to the accession of Ismail Pasha. The drastic nature of those methods, and more especially of the punishments which the rulers of Egypt were in the habit of awarding during the first half of the last century, and even at a later period, did not, indeed, differ very materially from those of their Pharaonic predecessors. Herodotus says:—

> King Amasis . . . established the law that every Egyptian should appear once a year before the governor of his canton, and show his means of living; or, failing to do so, and to prove that he got an honest livelihood, should be put to death.[1]

If the general principles adopted by Mehemet Ali had continued to be applied, and especially if recourse had not been made to European credit, it is just possible that the Egyptian system of administration would have been gradually reformed in a manner suitable to the requirements of the country. But it is one of the commonplaces of political science that the most dangerous period for a radically bad system of government is the moment when some reformer, himself inexperienced in the art of government, has laid a rash hand on the old fabric, and has shaken it to such an extent as to make it totter to its fall, but when sufficient time has not yet elapsed to admit of an improved system of government taking root.

In the endeavours, possibly well-intentioned, but certainly misdirected, that Ismail Pasha made to introduce European civilisation at a rapid rate into Egypt, he was necessarily obliged to have recourse to European assistance. The only chance of introducing the new wine of European ideas into the old bottles of Eastern conservatism, without producing a dangerous fermentation, lay in proceeding with caution, and notably in selecting with the utmost care the European agents through whose instrumentality the changes might gradually have been effected. Unfortunately, no such care was taken. The Europeans into whose hands Ismail Pasha threw himself, were but too often drawn from the very class which he should most of all have avoided.[1] Many were adventurers of the type represented in fiction by M. Alphonse Daudet's "Nabab,"[2] whose sole object was to enrich themselves at the expense of the country. Moreover, few of those who exercised any influence in matters connected with the government of Egypt possessed sufficient experience of the East to enable them to apply wisely the knowledge, which they had acquired elsewhere, to the new conditions under which they were called upon to work.

---

[1] Book ii. p. 177. After remarking that Solon the Athenian borrowed this law from the Egyptians and imposed it on his countrymen—a statement which, according to a note given by Rawlinson, is incorrect—Herodotus naïvely adds, "It is indeed an excellent custom."

The result was that Europeans acquired a bad name in Egypt, from which, after years of patient labour and instructive example on the part of the many high-minded Europeans of divers nationalities who were subsequently engaged in Egyptian work, they only gradually recovered. It was, moreover, impossible that constant association with the classes to which allusion is made above should not have produced a marked effect on the views of an astute, but superficial cynic such as Ismail Pasha. He has often been credited with having systematically based his conduct on the assumption that no man living was honest,[1] and, looking at the personal experience through which he passed, it cannot be a matter for surprise that he should have entertained such an opinion.

---

[1] A highly qualified authority, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Odysseus," says: "From their first appearance, the Turks displayed a strange power of collecting together apostates, renegades, and people who had more ability than moral qualities."—*Turkey in Europe*, p. 62.

[2] It is well known that the character of the Nabab was drawn from an individual who existed in Egypt not many years ago.

The result of Lord Goschen's mission was that Ismail Pasha had, for the first time, to deal with a small body of European officials, who were not only invested with more ample powers than any which had previously been conferred on European functionaries in Egypt, but who were also of a different type from those Europeans with whom he had heretofore been generally brought in contact. I do not claim for the European officials who, at or about this time, came to Egypt any special qualities which are not to be found in abundance amongst other members of the civil services of France and England. We displayed, I conceive, the ordinary variety of capacity and character which was to be anticipated from our previous training, and from the manner in which we had been selected. But we all possessed some characteristics in common. We were all honest. We were all capable of forming and of expressing independent opinions, and we were all determined to do our duty to the best of our abilities in the discharge of the functions which were respectively assigned to us. In one respect, the position of the British differed from that of the French officials. The latter had been selected, and were more or less avowedly supported by their Government. The British officials could not count on any such support. But the distinction was of less practical importance than might at first sight appear. It was well understood that, if the British officials found that their advice was systematically neglected, and that they could not, with a proper sense of what was due to their own self-respect, carry on their duties in a fairly satisfactory manner, they would resign their appointments, a course which would not only have caused a good deal of embarrassment, but would also have strengthened the hostile public opinion then clamouring against the existing régime in Egypt in terms which were daily becoming more menacing.

---

[1] Macaulay says of Charles II.: "According to him, every person was to be bought; but some people haggled more about their price than others; and when this haggling was very obstinate and very skilful, it was called by some fine name. The chief trick by which clever men kept up the price of their abilities was called 'integrity'" (*Works*, vol. i. p. 132). This passage probably describes Ismail Pasha's habit of thought with tolerable accuracy.

Ismail Pasha failed to recognise the importance of the changes to which he had assented. Had he succeeded in acquiring the confidence of this small body of European officials, and in enlisting their services on his side, it is not only possible, but even probable, that he would have remained Khedive of Egypt till the day of his death. But, for a variety of reasons, which will appear more fully in the sequel of this narrative, he failed to do so. Perhaps the difficulties of the situation were such that it was impossible for him to do so. The result was that the officials in question were necessarily thrown into an attitude of hostility. And the further result was that a series of events took place which in the end led to the downfall of the Khedive. In fact, an opportunity, such as sometimes presents itself in politics, then occurred, which, had it been skilfully used with a true insight into the main facts of the situation and into the direction to which affairs were drifting, might not impossibly have turned the current of Egyptian history into another channel, and might have saved the Khedive from the disaster which was impending over him. Such opportunities, if they are not grasped at the moment, rarely recur. As it was, the causes which were tending towards the downfall of the Khedive continued to operate unchecked, and the new European element introduced into the administration, far from impeding, hastened the advent of the crisis.

One of the appointments made at this time, namely, that of Sir Gerald Fitzgerald to the head of the Accounts Department, calls for some special remarks.

It is possible for the finances of a country to be badly administered, whilst, at the same time, the accounts may be in good order. On the other hand, it is impossible for the statesman or the financier to commence the work of fiscal and administrative reform seriously until, by the organisation of a proper Department of Accounts, he is placed in possession of the true facts connected with the resources at his disposal and the State expenditure.

In 1876, the Egyptian accounts were in a state of the utmost confusion. The main reason why the financial settlement made in 1876 broke down was that the materials out of which to construct any stable financial edifice were wanting. The Finance Minister, Ismail Pasha Sadik, who was exiled in November 1876, and who, shortly afterwards, met with a tragic death,[1] boasted that in one year he had extracted £15,000,000 from the people of Egypt. The revenue collected in 1875 is said to have amounted to £10,800,000. The financial combination of November 18, 1876, was based on the collection of a revenue amounting to £10,500,000. There can be no doubt that this estimate was excessive. Twenty years later, after a long period of honest and careful administration, the Egyptian revenue was only about £11,000,000.

---

[1] There can be no doubt that Ismail Pasha Sadik was murdered in a boat whilst proceeding up the Nile.

In 1876, it was, indeed, impossible to arrive at a true estimate of the revenue. The inquiries of Messrs. Goschen and Joubert, Lord Vivian reported, "soon disclosed false accounts, glaring discrepancies, and evident suppressions of sources of revenue." It was this which, more than anything else, hampered Lord Goschen's proceedings. He saw that until more light was thrown on the facts connected with Egyptian finance, any arrangement which could be made would have to be of a provisional character.

I give one instance of the difficulties which at that time had to be encountered in arriving at a true estimate of the Egyptian revenue. Relying on the only figures which were at the time available, Lord Goschen took the net railway receipts at £900,000 a year. Some time afterwards, it was discovered that, to the extent of £300,000 a year, these receipts were fictitious. In the first place, a considerable sum was paid every year for the movement of troops, an item which, under a well-regulated system of accounts, would have been shown as an inter-departmental transaction. In the second place, it was discovered that any of the Khedivial family or the friends and boon companions of the Khedive who wished to travel by rail, rarely went by the ordinary trains. They frequently ordered special trains, for which they paid nothing, merely signing a document, termed a "ragaa," intimating that the train had been ordered by the Khedive, and that its cost was to be charged to him. The money was, of course, never paid to the Railway Administration. Nevertheless, these book entries were treated as real receipts in the figures furnished to Lord Goschen.

It was obvious that, under such circumstances as these, the first elementary requirement, which would have to precede any attempt to reform the fiscal system, was to introduce order into the Accounts Department. This work was undertaken by Sir Gerald Fitzgerald, who, by dint of untiring industry and perseverance, overcame all the very formidable obstacles which he had to encounter. The Egyptian Accounts Department is now thoroughly well organised. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this achievement. Of the many Englishmen who, by steady and unostentatious work, have rendered good service to the cause of Egyptian reform, there is no one to whom greater merit can be assigned than Sir Gerald Fitzgerald. He did not take any personal part in the reforms themselves, but he performed work which was indispensable to others if the reforms were to be carried out. The kind of work which Sir Gerald Fitzgerald and his successors performed in Egypt does not attract much public attention, but those who have themselves filled responsible positions will appreciate its value.

# CHAPTER III

## THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

### November 1876–April 1878

**Condition** of Egypt—The law of the Moukábala—Petty taxes—The Egyptian public service—The fiscal system—Floating debt—Efforts to pay interest on the funded debt—Famine—The coupon of May 1, 1878—The Commissioners of the Debt—The Commission of Inquiry—The Khedive proposes a partial inquiry—The Commissioners decline to take part in it—The Khedive accepts a full inquiry.

The state of Egypt at this time was deplorable. Estates, representing about one-fifth of the arable lands of the country, had passed into the hands of the Khedive; and these estates, instead of being farmed out to the dispossessed proprietors, were administered direct by the Khedive and cultivated to a great extent by forced labour. No single measure contributed more than this to render the existing régime as intolerable to the people of Egypt as it was rapidly becoming to the foreign creditors.[1]

In 1872, the law of the Moukábala had been passed. By this law, all landowners could redeem one-half of the land-tax to which they were liable by payment of six years' tax, either in one sum or in instalments spread over a period of twelve years. "The operation of the law of the Moukábala," Mr. Cave said, "is perhaps the most striking instance of the reckless manner in which the means of the future have been sacrificed to meet the pressing needs of the present."

---

[1] "It is certain, so many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles. Lucan noteth well the state of Rome before the Civil War:

Hinc usura vorax, rapidumque in tempore foenus,
Hinc concussa fides, et multis utile bellum."

*Bacon's Essays*, "Of Seditions and Troubles."

This is quite true, but the explanation is also very simple. There was never the least intention to adhere to the engagements taken towards the landowners. When the proper time arrived, it was intended to find means for re-imposing taxation in some other form, and thus recoup the loss to the Treasury incurred by the partial redemption of the land-tax.

Besides the land-tax, which was the main resource of the country, a number of petty taxes of the most harassing nature were levied. I gave Lord Vivian a list of thirty-seven of such taxes, and I doubt if the list was complete.

The evil consequences, which would in any case have resulted from a defective fiscal system, were enhanced by the character of the agents through whose instrumentality the taxes were collected. It can be no matter for surprise that they were corrupt and oppressive, and scarcely, indeed, a matter for just blame; for the treatment, which they received at the hands of the Government whom they served, was such as to be almost prohibitive of integrity in the performance of official duties. The picture, which Mr. Cave gave of the position held by the Egyptian officials at this time, was certainly not overdrawn. "One of the causes," he said, "which operates most against the honesty and efficiency of native officers is the precarious tenure of office. From the Pasha downwards, every office is a tenancy at will, and experience shows that while dishonesty goes wholly or partially unpunished, independence of thought and action, resolution to do one's duty and to resist the peculation and neglect which pervade every department, give rise to intrigues which, sooner or later, bring about the downfall of honest officials; consequently, those who begin with a desire to do their duty give way before the obstructiveness which paralyses every effort.[1] The public servant of Egypt, like the Roman Proconsul, too often tries to make as much as he can out of his office while it lasts; and the scandal takes place of the retirement, in a few years with a large fortune, of a man whose salary is perhaps £40 a month, and who has plundered the Treasury on the one hand, and the peasant on the other."

In fact, the fiscal system of Egypt at this time violated at every point and in a flagrant degree the four well-known general principles laid down by Adam Smith and adopted by subsequent economists,[2] as those on which a sound fiscal policy should be based. Glaring inequalities existed in the incidence of taxation. The sums demanded from the taxpayers were arbitrarily fixed and were uncertain in amount. The taxes were levied without any reference to the time and manner in which it was most convenient for the contributor to pay, and the system of collection, so far from being "contrived so as to keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible over and above what the tax brings into the public treasury," was such as to ensure results of a diametrically opposite description. Under such circumstances, financial policy, instead of being used as a powerful engine of political and social improvement, had become merely a means for first extorting the maximum amount of revenue from unwilling contributors, and then spending the money on objects from which the contributors themselves derived little or no benefit.

---

[1] I can give a remarkable illustration, the facts of which are within my personal knowledge, in support of Mr. Cave's statement. Shortly after the Commission of the Debt was established in 1876, it was noticed that the Custom-House receipts at Suez, which were applied to the service of the debt, fell off in a most unaccountable manner; also, that a new local director had been appointed. Under the Decree signed by the Khedive on November 18, 1876, the whole of the Custom-House revenue was to be paid direct to the Commissioners of the Debt. No other receipt than that signed by one of the Commissioners was legally valid. The suspicions of the Commissioners were aroused. They asked why the director had been changed. They received evasive and very unsatisfactory answers. They insisted, therefore, on the dismissed official being produced, dead or alive. A somewhat acrimonious correspondence took place, with the result that after a delay of several months the official in question made his appearance at the office of the Commissioners of the Debt. It then appeared that he had received an order from the Khedive to pay the Suez Custom-House receipts direct to His Highness. He demurred, on the very legitimate ground that he would thus be committing an illegal act. He was at once arrested and sent to one of the most remote parts of the Soudan, whence he would certainly never have returned, had it not been that the Commissioners took up his case.

[2] Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. chap. ii.

A system such as that described above would at any time have been oppressive. At the particular moment of which this history treats, it weighed on the people of Egypt with exceptional severity.

The interest on the funded debt, heavy as it was, was not the only extraordinary charge which the Khedive had to meet. Large sums of money were due to contractors and others for goods supplied to the Egyptian Government. In default of payment, "orders had been given by all foreign houses trading with Egypt to refuse to furnish the Government with any supplies except for payment in cash on delivery." The claims themselves were "being hawked about for sale at a depreciation of 50 per cent."

In August 1877, Lord Vivian warned the Egyptian Government that the creditors "would certainly fall back upon their indisputable right to attack the Government before the Tribunals." "The Government," he added, "will thus find themselves confronted with a mass of legal sentences against them, which they must either satisfy in full and at once, or it must inevitably attract the serious attention of the Powers who contributed to establish the Courts of the Reform."

But the Egyptian Government had no money with which to settle the claims; neither, in the then exhausted state of their credit, could money be borrowed. Lord Vivian prophesied correctly. The creditors had recourse to the law-courts. Many of them obtained judgments against the Government, and the non-execution of the judgments led to the interference of the Powers under whose auspices the Mixed Courts had but recently been established. Notably, the German Government "considered that the Khedive was acting in a manner which should not be allowed in refusing to pay claims when required to do so by the Courts of Law." The German Ambassador in London informed Lord Derby that "Prince Bismarck wished for united action on the subject by all the Powers, if only to avoid the possibility of separate action on the part of some of them."

In the meanwhile, everything was being sacrificed in the attempt to pay the interest and sinking fund on the funded debt. A sum of £1,579,000 was, in 1877, devoted to the extinction of debt. The nominal capital paid off amounted to £3,110,000, but, as both Lord Vivian and the Commissioners of the Debt pointed out, the operation of the sinking fund was of a delusive character, for a debt, at least equal in amount to that which was extinguished, was being created by the non-payment of the employés and the other creditors, whose claims had not been funded. On January 6, 1877, Lord Vivian wrote: "The Government employés are many months in arrears of pay, so much so that the cashiers of the Caisse are actually being paid out of the private means of the Commissioners (although their own salaries have not been paid), in order not to expose them to the temptation of handling large sums of money whilst actually without the means of subsistence."

While, on the one hand, the employés were unpaid, on the other hand, the taxes were being collected with merciless severity. Lord Vivian, whose despatches throughout this period do credit alike to his humanity and his foresight, felt keenly on this subject. "I hear," he wrote, "reports that the peasantry are cruelly treated to extract the taxes from them, the fact probably being, partly that the taxes are being collected in advance, and partly that, as the date of the coupon falls so soon after the harvest, insufficient time is given to the peasantry to realise fair prices for their grain, and that they are unwilling to make the ruinous sacrifice of forced sales." The Khedive, in conversation with Lord Vivian, "admitted that, in order to pay the coupon, the taxes were being collected for nine months, and in some places for a year in advance."

In spite of the rigour used in collecting taxes, the non-payment of the Government employés, and the neglect of the judgment creditors, it was with the utmost difficulty that sufficient money could be obtained to pay the interest on the funded debt. During the year ending on July 15, 1877, the revenue pledged to the service of the Unified Debt, which had been estimated to yield £4,800,000, only yielded £3,328,000.

It is well-nigh certain that the financial arrangement made in 1876 would, in any case, have broken down. As it was, an exceptionally bad Nile, the Russo-Turkish War with its attendant expenditure, and the depression of trade, hastened the crisis.

Bad as was the state of affairs in 1877, it was worse in 1878, for the full effect of the low Nile of 1877 was only felt in the following year. In Upper Egypt there was a famine. Sir Alexander

Baird, who had been a frequent visitor to Egypt during the winter months, was asked by the Government to assist in the relief of the population. In the report which he subsequently addressed to the Minister of Finance, he said :—

> It is almost incredible the distances travelled by women and children, begging from village to village. . . . It is not possible to state how many died from actual starvation, for in no instance does the death-register show a death by starvation, but I am satisfied that the excessive mortality during the period of scarcity was caused by dysentery and other diseases brought on by insufficient and unwholesome food. The poor were in some instances reduced to such extremities of hunger that they were driven to satisfy their cravings with the refuse and garbage of the streets.

The nadir both of financial chaos and of popular misery was reached in the summer and autumn of 1878. On May 1, 1878, a sum of about £2,000,000 was due for interest on the Unified Debt. On March 31, only about £500,000 was in the hands of the Commissioners of the Debt. The balance, amounting to about £1,500,000, had, therefore, to be collected in the space of one month.

The Commissioners of the Debt were of opinion that it would have been better not to pay this coupon. We should have preferred to allow the financial collapse, which was manifestly inevitable, to come at once as a preliminary to the establishment of a better order of things. We were aware that the money could not be paid without taking the taxes in advance, a course to which we were opposed as being oppressive to the peasantry, and also contrary to the true interests of the bondholders. Not only, therefore, did we abstain from putting any pressure on the Khedive to pay, but we even discussed the desirability of protesting against payment.

Unfortunately, the French Government did not share this view. French public opinion held that the Khedive could pay his debts if he chose to do so, that the distress alleged to exist in Egypt was fictitious, and that the arguments based on the impoverishment of the country were fabricated in order to throw dust in the eyes of the public and to excite humanitarian sympathy where no sympathy was deserved. An opinion was also entertained by a large body of the French public that the Khedive had hidden stores of wealth on which he could draw if he thought fit to do so. Subsequent events showed that this story had no foundation in fact. But there were at the time some reasonable grounds for believing it to be true. On December 8, 1876, Lord Vivian reported that "it was impossible to account for the disposal of the very large sums of money over which the Egyptian Government have had control during the last year; £4,000,000 for the Suez Canal shares, £5,000,000 advance from the French, and nearly a year's revenue have disappeared, while the payment of the coupon of the Unified Debt has been deferred, all the public employés are in arrears of pay, and heavy debts remain unsettled." The same idea was developed more fully in a petition presented by the French colony of Alexandria to M. Waddington, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs. What, they asked, had become of the money which had been of late years poured into Egypt? The Custom-House statistics showed that a great part of it had remained in the country.

> Comment alors parler de la détresse du pays, et de l'impuissance de payer ses charges? Que le Gouvernement explique ce qu'est devenu tout cet or! Il est donc bien évident que le Gouvernement Égyptien est inexcusable de ne pas remplir les engagements qu'il a pris solennellement à la face de l'Europe, et c'est sur lui que retombe la lourde responsabilité des ruines qu'il accumule en Égypte et qui frappent pour la plus grande partie la colonie Européenne.

The cause of the bondholders was warmly espoused by the French diplomatic representative at Cairo, Baron des Michels, who turned a deaf ear to all arguments based either on the necessities of the Khedive or the misery of the Egyptian people. The result was that, on April 16, 1878, the French Government, through their Ambassador in London, informed Lord Salisbury, who, on April 2, 1878, succeeded Lord Derby at the Foreign Office, that there was "every reason to believe that the Khedive could pay the coupon, which falls due in May, if he chose to do so." M. Waddington expressed a hope that the British Government would join the French Government in pressing for payment. Lord Vivian was accordingly instructed to act in concert with Baron des Michels on this subject.

The British Government thus became in a certain degree responsible for the oppression which necessarily accompanied the collection of the taxes. Moreover, the step taken at this moment involved a departure both from the local Egyptian policy, which the British Government had hitherto pursued, and also from their general policy in such matters. As regards local policy, the British had never espoused the cause of the bondholders so warmly as the French Government. On the contrary, a just consideration for the interests of the Egyptian people had always tempered any support given to the foreign creditors. As regards general policy, it had for years been the tradition of the London Foreign Office that British subjects, who invested their money in a foreign country, must do so at their own risk. They could not rely on any energetic support in the enforcement of their claims. There was evidently some special reason for so brusque a departure from the principles heretofore adopted. The reason is not far to seek. The Berlin Congress was then about to sit to regulate the situation arising from the recent Russo-Turkish war. Egyptian interests had to give way to broader diplomatic considerations. It was necessary to conciliate the French. The French initiative was, therefore, followed.

Steps were taken to collect the money necessary to pay the coupon. Two of the most iron-fisted Pashas who could be found were sent into the provinces. They were accompanied by a staff of money-lenders who were prepared to buy in advance the crops of the cultivators. Thus, the low Nile having diminished the quantity of the crop, the peasantry of Egypt were deprived of such benefits as some of them, at all events, might have derived from the high prices consequent on the scarcity. "In some cases," Sir Alexander Baird wrote, "perfectly authenticated, corn was sold to the merchants for 50 piastres an ardeb, which was delivered in one month's time when it was worth 120 piastres an ardeb."

The money was, however, obtained. The last instalment was paid to the Commissioners of the Debt a few hours before the coupon fell due. The great diversity of currency, and the fact that many of the coins were strung together to be used as ornaments, bore testimony to the pressure which had been used in the collection of the taxes.

The only result of paying this coupon was that the crisis was delayed for a short time. The sufferings of the people of Egypt were increased, whilst the position of the foreign creditors, so far from being improved, was rendered rather worse than it was before.

Amidst this clash of conflicting interests, the main question which presented itself was, what could be done to place the finances of Egypt on a sound footing. It was clear that the arrangements made in 1876 would have to be modified, but to what extent were they to be modified? By what procedure were the modifications to be introduced? What guarantees could be obtained that any new arrangement would acquire a greater degree of stability than those which had gone before?

The discussion of these questions necessitates some observations on the relations between the Egyptian Government and the Commissioners of the Debt, upon which the main interest of Egyptian affairs centred at this moment.

The position of the Commissioners was one of great difficulty. They were the representatives of the bondholders. An obligation, therefore, rested on them to support the just claims of the bondholders by every legitimate means in their power. Apart, however, from the fact that it was impossible for any one of ordinary humanity and common sense to ignore the pitiable condition in which the people of Egypt were then placed, it was clear that the interests of the bondholders and of the Egyptian taxpayers, if properly understood, were far from being divergent. On the contrary, they were in a great measure identical. Both were interested in being relieved from a system of government which was ruinous to the interests of one class and in the highest degree oppressive to the other. Would it not be possible to use the bondholding interest as a lever to improve the Egyptian administration, and thus both relieve the lot of the peasantry and, at the same time, afford some substantial guarantee to the foreign creditors that whatever fresh financial obligations were taken would be respected? That was the important question of the moment.

In view of the relatively large political and financial interests of France and Great Britain in Egypt, it was natural that the French and British representatives should take the lead in the proceedings of the Commission of the Debt. I was fortunate in being associated with a French colleague who took a broad view of the situation. M. de Blignières was a French official, and the tendencies of most French officials are somewhat more bureaucratic than those of their counterparts in England; but he was a French official of the best type, loyal, straightforward, intelligent, and endowed with a high degree of moral courage. On all essential points, we worked in complete harmony. We were both determined that the petty international rivalries, which had been the bane of Egypt, and which were skilfully used by Ismail Pasha to avert the possibility of common action on the part of France and England, should not be allowed to separate us. That we succeeded in sinking any minor differences of opinion in the pursuit of a common object, was sufficiently proved by the fact that each of us was at times blamed for sacrificing the interests of his own country to that of the other. In later days, when the relations between France and England became unfortunately embittered, I often looked back with regret to the time when I was able to co-operate heartily with a French colleague, such as M. de Blignières, for whom I entertained a sincere respect and a warm personal friendship.[1]

The position of M. de Blignières was in some respects more difficult than my own. I had not been appointed by the British Government, and was, therefore, free to act according to the dictates of my own conscience and to the best of my own judgment. The tendencies and traditions of the British Government, moreover, ran counter to any endeavour to enforce the claims of the foreign creditors at whatsoever cost to the population of Egypt. The personal influence of Lord Vivian was exerted on the side of justice and moderation. The British bondholders were also, as a body, perfectly reasonable. They naturally objected to any arbitrary infringement of their legal rights, but there could be little doubt that if a statement of facts and figures could be put before them, the accuracy of which could be guaranteed by their own trustees, there would not be any insuperable difficulty in obtaining their acquiescence to an equitable settlement of all pending questions. Moreover, the influence of the bondholders in England was limited. A strong body of public opinion existed which was hostile to their presumed interests, and which, in its anxiety to do justice to the people of Egypt, was inclined sometimes even to err on the side of doing less than justice to the foreign creditors. Those who represented this aspect of British public opinion criticised, more frequently than not in a hostile spirit, the action of the European officials who were at that time employed in prominent positions in Egypt. A good deal of this criticism was based on an erroneous appreciation of the facts of the case, but I never regarded it as really hostile. On the contrary, I esteemed it an advantage to be able to strengthen my position in case of need by an appeal to a body of general opinion which, even when misled on points of detail, was pursuing praiseworthy and very legitimate objects.

---

[1] M. de Blignières died in 1900. He was a brilliant and also very voluble conversationalist. In 1879, I accompanied him on a visit to Lord Salisbury, who was then residing at Dieppe. In 1887, Lord Salisbury wrote to me: "The other day the gentleman who described himself at my house at Dieppe as a '*personnage muet*'—M. de Blignières—called on me. He had not acquired any fresh claim to that designation. But he was very agreeable, and more friendly than I had been led to expect."

M. de Blignières, on the other hand, was nominated by the French Government, and the French Government were greatly under the influence of the bondholding interest. The French bondholders were inclined to be far less reasonable than the English, neither did there apparently exist any body of public opinion in France, which could act as a check on any extreme views advanced by the foreign creditors of Egypt.

Both M. de Blignières and myself saw from an early date that the financial arrangements of 1876 would have to be modified, but we also held that an arbitrary reduction in the rate of interest would be unjust to the bondholders and of doubtful benefit to the taxpayers. Before we could approve of any fresh financial combination, it was evident that more light would have to be thrown on the situation. Under these circumstances, the idea of holding a General Inquiry into the financial condition of the country, which was originated about this time, took root, and obtained some support amongst the more moderate of those who were interested in the solvency of the Egyptian Government. "But," Lord Vivian reported, "the bondholders ask that any inquiry into the financial position should be impartial and exhaustive, leaving nothing behind it uninvestigated in the shape of debt, nor any pretext for further resettlement. On these conditions, they are prepared to make such a fair sacrifice of interest as may be found absolutely necessary."

It would have been wise on the part of the Khedive if, at this moment, he had on his own initiative invited a full inquiry into the financial situation of Egypt. But he was not disposed to do so. He hoped to obtain an arbitrary reduction in the rate of interest on the debt without any inquiry. Eventually, the Commissioners of the Debt took the initiative. In a letter addressed to the Minister of Finance on January 9, 1878, they dwelt on the gravity of the situation and suggested an inquiry. The Khedive replied at length, declining to institute a general inquiry into the financial situation, but stating that he was willing to appoint a Commission whose sole duty it would be to ascertain the true amount of the Egyptian revenue. The Commissioners of the Debt were invited to take part in this inquiry.

A partial inquiry of this sort would have been worse than useless. The Commissioners of the Debt, therefore, addressed a further letter to the Egyptian Government, in which they again urged the necessity of a full inquiry, and declined to take part in any inquiry of a partial nature.

No attention was paid to this remonstrance, and, on January 27, 1878, a Khedivial Decree was issued instituting a Commission of Inquiry into the revenue only. A further Decree was to be issued nominating the Commissioners.

The issue of this Decree caused an explosion of European public opinion in Egypt. A meeting was held at Alexandria at which the more extreme of those who advocated the claims of the foreign creditors expressed themselves in terms condemnatory of any inquiry, as they considered that the Egyptian Government could meet all its engagements. A petition was sent to the representatives of the Powers, but it was couched in language so insulting to the Egyptian Government that Lord Vivian refused to notice it.

The Khedive did not, however, immediately abandon the idea of instituting a partial inquiry. The main difficulty was to find any qualified persons to conduct it. General (then Colonel) Gordon was at that time returning from the Soudan. The idea occurred to the Khedive that his services might be utilised. His high character, the weight that his name carried with the British public, and his known sympathy with the sufferings of the Egyptian people, all pointed him out as a useful instrument; whilst his inexperience in financial questions would, it was thought, lead him to accept the accuracy of any facts and figures which were laid before him by the Egyptian Government. Lord Vivian pointed out that "Colonel Gordon, with all his eminent qualities and abilities, had no experience in finance." The Khedive, however, held to his idea. General Gordon was invited to conduct a financial inquiry, and was at first inclined to accept the invitation. M. de Lesseps was also asked to serve on the proposed Commission, and intimated his willingness to do so. The negotiation with General Gordon, however, soon broke down, and he left Egypt.[1]

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the tedious negotiations which then ensued. The British Government consistently supported "a full and complete inquiry" into the financial situation as the only possible solution of existing difficulties. The German, Austrian, and Italian Governments also supported the proposal. So also did the French Government, although as it became daily more and more clear that the result of any impartial inquiry must be that the rate of interest on the debt would be reduced, their support was rather lukewarm.

After long and wearisome discussions over the scope of the inquiry and the persons to whom it should be entrusted, the Khedive eventually yielded. On March 15, I was able to write to Lord Goschen: "At last I really think that, after five months of incessant labour, the inquiry is settled." On

---

[1] These proceedings have formed the subject of much misrepresentation. The account of them given in Sir William Butler's *Charles George Gordon* (pp. 138-139) is incorrect. The sole reason why the negotiation broke down was that it was evident to every one concerned, including General Gordon himself, that he was not fitted to conduct any financial inquiry. He wrote at the time that he felt sure that he "was only to be a figurehead."—*Colonel Gordon in Central Africa*, p. 310.

April 4, 1878, a Khedivial Decree was issued appointing a Commission with the most extended powers of inquiry. M. Ferdinand de Lesseps lent the weight of his name to the Commission. He was appointed President, but did not take any active part in the proceedings, and left Egypt on May 9. Sir Rivers Wilson and Riaz Pasha were named Vice-Presidents. The four Commissioners of the Debt were appointed members. A capable Frenchman, M. Liron d'Airolles, was chosen to act as Secretary.

Some opposition had been offered, especially by the French, to the nomination of any Egyptian to be a member of the Commission. It was feared, with some reason, that no Egyptian would be sufficiently independent to express views which might be displeasing to the Khedive. These fears proved groundless. At a time when any show of independent opinion on the part of an Egyptian was accompanied with a good deal of personal risk, Riaz Pasha displayed a high degree of moral courage. His presence on the Commission was of material help to his colleagues, whose confidence he fully deserved and obtained.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE NUBAR-WILSON MINISTRY

### April 1878–November 1878

Difficulty of the task assigned to the Commission of Inquiry—Chérif Pasha declines to appear as a witness—Defects in the system of administration—The floating debt—The Rouznameh Loan—Loans from the Wakf and Beit-el-Mal Administrations—Ultimate reforms proposed by the Commissioners—Immediate reforms necessary—Enforcement of Ministerial responsibility—The Khedive's Civil List—Cession to the State of the Khedivial properties—The Khedive accepts the proposals of the Commissioners—Nubar Pasha forms a Ministry—Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières named Ministers—Loan authorised on the security of the Khedivial estates.

The Egyptian Verres[1] was at last, therefore, obliged to render an account of his stewardship to a body of men who were determined to arrive at the truth. The Commissioners, however, soon found that, in the confusion which then existed, the mere discovery of the accurate facts of the situation was a task which presented no inconsiderable difficulties, whilst the abuses which had grown up in the Egyptian administrative system were so general and so deep-rooted as to defy the application of any remedy which would be effectual and at the same time speedy. We had to deal not with a patient suffering from a single specific malady, but with one whose constitution was shattered and whose every organ was diseased. "Il s'agit, en effet," we said, "de créer tout un système fiscal, et cela avec un personnel très restreint ; à présent presque rien n'existe de ce qui doit exister."

---

[1] There is certainly a somewhat close analogy between Verres and Ismail Pasha; *e.g.* "Hoc praetore Siculi neque suas leges, neque nostra senatusconsulta, neque communia jura tenuerunt . . . Nulla res . . . nisi ad nutum istius judicata est; nulla res tam patria cujusquam atque avita fuit quae non ab eo imperio istius abjudicaretur. Innumerabiles pecuniae ex aratorum bonis novo nefarioque instituto coactae," etc.—Cicero, *In C. Verrem,* Actio Prima, iv. et v.

At the outset of the inquiry, a preliminary difficulty of a somewhat serious nature occurred. Chérif Pasha was at that time, next to the Khedive, the leading man in Egypt. No one thought that he was in any degree responsible for the confusion which then existed, but, inasmuch as he was Minister of Justice, it was to him that the Commissioners were obliged to turn for information as to the working of the judicial system in so far as fiscal matters were concerned. Under the Decree instituting the Commission, all Egyptian officials were bound to furnish such information as might be demanded of them. Chérif Pasha, on receiving a summons to attend before the Commission, offered to answer questions in writing, but his proud nature resented — and not unnaturally resented—the idea of appearing in person before the Commissioners. On the other hand, had the latter yielded, all chance of extracting the truth from other witnesses would have been shipwrecked at the outset of the inquiry. The Commissioners, therefore, insisted on Chérif Pasha appearing in person. Under these circumstances, Chérif Pasha could only yield or resign. He chose the latter course.

The first step taken by the Commissioners was to provide for the payment of the arrears due to the Government employés and pensioners. They then set to work to examine into the system of administration of the country, more especially into the fiscal system. It is unnecessary to give the results of their inquiries at any length. It was found that public rumour had not exaggerated the nature of the prevailing abuses. Certain laws and regulations existed on paper, but no one ever thought of obeying them. The principal officials concerned were, indeed, often ignorant of their existence. New taxes were levied, old taxes were increased, and changes introduced without any formal authority. The village Sheikh executed the orders of the Moudir, the latter those of the Inspector-General, who, again, acted under "superior order." This "superior order," in fact, constituted the law. The officials obeyed it, even though it were only communicated verbally; and no taxpayer ever dreamt of challenging it or of protesting against it. The Inspector-General of Upper Egypt, on being asked to whom the taxpayer could address himself if he had any complaint to make, answered, with a naïveté arising without doubt from long familiarity with a system which he considered both just and natural, "Pour les impôts, le fellah ne peut se plaindre; il sait qu'on agit par 'ordre supérieur.' C'est le Gouvernement lui-même qui les réclame; à qui voulez-vous qu'il se plaigne?"[1] The Inspector-General unconsciously indicated the main difficulty in the path of the Egyptian reformer. On the one hand, the people had from time immemorial been accustomed to yield implicit obedience to the Government. On the other hand, inasmuch as the Government were themselves the chief cause of all the mischief in the country, the direction reform had necessarily to take was that of putting some restraint on the exercise of arbitrary power. How were abuses to be reformed without shaking the props which had so far held Egyptian society together, and on which the whole edifice rested? That was a question which, at a later period, gave cause for much anxiety.

---

[1] This answer is alive with the spirit of the ancient Oriental despotisms. Thus Buckle (*History of Civilisation*, vol. i. p. 80) records that the Institutes of Menu laid down that any native of India belonging to the Sudra caste must always remain a slave for ever, although his master granted him his freedom. "For," said the lawgiver, "of a state which is natural to him, by whom can he be divested?" Paterson (*The Nemesis of Nations*, p. 50) also alludes to the same point.

Another characteristic answer was given by a high Egyptian official who was examined before the Commission. A professional tax was at that time levied in Egypt. Nothing, in fact, can be fairer than that, in an agricultural country such as Egypt, the non-agricultural classes should bear their share of taxation. It was, however, perhaps going rather far to levy the tax on the humblest of the artisan class. But the Government went much farther. Agricultural labourers paid the tax; in fact, it had become a poll-tax, which was paid by all the poorer classes, whether or not they exercised anything which could be called a profession. The witness in question was asked whether he did not think it rather hard that a man who exercised no profession should be called upon to pay a professional tax. He expressed great and, without doubt, genuine astonishment. Was it, he said, the fault of the Government that the man did not exercise any profession? He could engage in any profession he chose. The Government did not prevent him from doing so. But, of course, if he chose not to engage in any profession, he must none the less pay the tax; otherwise an injustice would be done to those who were engaged in professions! Of the many specious arguments which have been from time to time advanced in Egypt to make the worse appear the better cause, this is certainly one of the most remarkable.

The Commissioners did not confine their researches to the methods adopted for the collection of the revenue. The corvée, they found, was a "fruitful source of extortion and injustice." It was ascertained, notwithstanding positive official assertions to the contrary, that the Khedive's private estates were cultivated by means of forced labour. The recruitment for the army was managed in an irregular and very cruel manner.[1] It often happened that a recruit first paid a heavy sum to obtain exemption from military service, and was after all obliged to serve without the money being refunded to him. In the vital question of the distribution of water for purposes of irrigation, the interests of the poorer cultivators were sacrificed to those of the rich proprietors. No courts of justice, worthy of the name, existed.

Herr von Kremer and myself were delegated by our colleagues to inquire into the outstanding claims against the Egyptian Government. Many a weary hour did we pass in the broiling heat of an Egyptian summer afternoon in endeavouring to unravel the tangled meshes of some of the most astounding financial operations in which any Government in the world has ever been engaged. The waste had been fearful. The head of the Ordnance Department, if he heard that some new description of cannon had been invented, would order, not one as an experiment, but a couple of dozen, on the ground, as was explained to us, that Egypt "could not remain behind other nations in military matters." Names familiar throughout Europe during the Napoleonic era turned up as recipients of the Khedivial largesse. The accounts also showed that the eulogies poured at one time on Ismail Pasha by a portion of the European press were not altogether due to disinterested motives. Money was due to contractors and tradesmen of all sorts. An Egyptian princess had run up an account of £150,000 with a French dressmaker. Large sums had been spent at Constantinople, as to which it was stated "on n'a pas pu rendre compte." One financial operation was of so complicated a nature that it almost defied the ingenuity of man to get to the bottom of it. It appeared, however, that the Khedive had been engaged with his late Finance Minister in an operation on the Stock Exchange, the basis of which was that he was to "bear" his own stock. In some cases, extravagant sums had been paid for work done or for goods furnished. Thus, the harbour works at Alexandria cost over £2,500,000. According to a trustworthy estimate, they should have cost about £1,400,000. In this case, however, the work was one of real utility, and it was well executed, although at a high price. In a number of other cases, large sums were owing without the Egyptian Government having anything to show for their money. Interest at exorbitant rates, bonuses on the renewal of bills, differences between the real and nominal value of securities, and other financial juggleries, constituted almost the whole of the claim.

---

[1] One of the Inspectors of the Antiquities Department (Mr. Howard Carter), in the course of some excavations made at Dendera in the month of August 1904, came across the corpse of a man who had been tortured and put to death by Daoud Pasha, a former notorious Moudir of the Province, for trying to evade conscription for the army. Mr. Carter reported: "The corpse presented a ghastly sight; the head was turned towards the left, the chin resting on the shoulder, the features distorted in agony, and the tongue between the teeth. The body was in a contorted position, with the legs bent and widely open. The hands were held at the wrists in rough wooden stocks, made apparently out of two rowlocks from a native boat, fixed together, extremely tight, by means of two large iron native nails, which pierced the wrists, and were clamped below. Tied round the arms, high up near the arm-pits, was a halter, which had evidently been used to drag the man along, either dead or alive, the back showing distinct signs of laceration. It was even possible to detect that the hands had been much swollen from the pressure of the stocks."—*Egypt*, No. 1 of 1905, p. 104.

There was one series of operations, termed "opérations d'extourne," which are worth describing in some detail. The operation was after this fashion. The Egyptian Government, being in want of ready money, sold to some Levantine firm a quantity of grain which they did not possess, and which, for the most part, they were never likely to possess. The purchase money was paid at once; the grain had to be delivered to the purchasers a few months later. When the time for its delivery arrived, a certain amount was in some cases delivered, as it was then the practice of the Egyptian Government to collect a portion of the taxes in kind. The remainder was bought back by the Government at a price of 25 per cent above that which had been paid by the original purchasers. In other cases, the Government never delivered any grain, neither was any money repaid at the time. The Government, however, still went through the form of repurchase, and the original purchasers received Treasury bills, bearing interest at the rate of 18 or 20 per cent, not for the amount which they had in the first instance advanced, but for the far larger sum for which the Government eventually effected the nominal repurchase of the grain. It is impossible to say what rate of interest the Egyptian Government really paid in the end for money advanced under this system. It must have been something enormous.

Instances might, in fact, be multiplied to show the ruinous nature of the financial operations to which the Government were at that time reduced in order to obtain money. In one case, which may be cited by way of example, the Government, in part payment of a debt due to a local bank, handed over £230,000 worth of Unified Stock at a price of $31\frac{5}{8}$; in other words, in order to pay £72,000, the Government saddled the country permanently with a debt of £230,000, bearing interest at the rate of 6 per cent per annum.

We also found, in the course of our researches, that in 1874 a forced loan, entitled the "Emprunt Rouznameh," had been raised in the provinces. Subscriptions had been invited for a loan of £5,000,000 bearing interest at the rate of 9 per cent. About £1,800,000 was actually paid into the Treasury. We obtained from some of the villages a list of the subscribers to the loan; each list was accompanied by a declaration signed by the Notables of the village stating that the subscriptions were "perfectly voluntary." They were, of course, in no sense voluntary. No bonds were ever delivered to the subscribers and, up to the date of our inquiry, one instalment of interest only had been paid to a few favoured individuals.

We further discovered that the Government had laid their hands upon the money belonging to the Wakfs, that is to say, the Department which deals with Mohammedan religious endowments.

There was also at that time in Egypt an institution termed the Beit-el-Mal,[1] which administered the estates of orphans and minors. The duty of the director of this establishment was to invest the money of which he was trustee in the manner best suited to the interests of the cestuis-que trust. "En vertu d'ordre supérieur," the Director-General lent the money to the Government at 10 per cent interest, but he was never repaid the capital, neither did he receive any interest. The Director-General, on being asked whether the Minister of Finance gave him any security for the trust money which he lent to the Government, replied that, inasmuch as the Khedive had given an order, no security was necessary. "La garantie, c'est l'ordre du Khédive." "Dans le cours de nos recherches," we said, "nous avons été frappés de l'usage presqu'universel qui semble régner chez les fonctionnaires du Gouvernement Égyptien, et qui consiste dans l'affectation des fonds particuliers qui passent par leurs mains aux besoins du service gouvernemental. Les faits que nous avons racontés à propos de l'administration du Wakf, du Beit-el-Mal, de la Caisse des Orphelins, et des Écoles Nationales, peuvent servir d'exemple du système. Nous pourrions en citer d'autres."

---

[1] *Lit.* "The House of Property."

Besides the sums due to bankers and contractors, we found that there were numerous claims from such humble individuals as camel-drivers, barbers, donkey-boys, etc., all of which had to be included in the floating debt.

It is a pity that these claims could not have been submitted to a court of arbitration with full powers to deal with them. The result would probably have been that a few would have been admitted in full; others would have been reduced in various proportions, some very largely; whilst some would perhaps have been rejected altogether. Unfortunately, the Commissioners had no such powers. We could only decide what claims were admissible from a strictly legal point of view, leaving any doubtful cases to be decided by the law-courts. When the list came to be made out, it was found that the outstanding claims amounted to £6,276,000. The deficit for 1878 was estimated at £2,587,000,[1] and that of 1879 at £381,000. In all, therefore, a new floating debt, amounting to £9,244,000, had accrued, which in one form or another had to be added to the funded debt of the country.

It was easy to frame a crushing indictment against the system of government under which Egypt had of late years been administered. It was more difficult to indicate what measures could be taken to ensure any speedy improvement in the system. The Commissioners, however, pointed out the general directions which reforms should take. No tax should be levied save in virtue of a law which should be officially published. The collection of taxes should be really, as well as nominally, under the Minister of Finance. The Accounts Department should be reformed, and a system of annual budgets adopted. A Reserve Fund should be instituted to provide for any extraordinary expenses incurred whenever the Nile was exceptionally high or low. The taxes should no longer be taken in advance. A judicial system should be organised which would protect the people against an arbitrary abuse of authority. A number of small and vexatious taxes should be suppressed. A cadastral survey should be made. Reforms should be introduced into the methods of collecting the salt and tobacco duties. Proper regulations should be made for the distribution of water and the execution of public works. Forced labour should only be employed on public works of acknowledged utility. The terms of military service should be defined and limited, whilst at the same time some equitable system should be adopted for obtaining recruits for the army.

---

[1] This was an under-estimate. The actual deficit amounted to £3,440,000.

These proposed reforms were excellent in their way. But they all required time to inaugurate; capable administrators to give effect to them; experience to show in what particular form portions of the European system of government could, with advantage, be transplanted to an Eastern country; and above all, a gradual change in the habits of thought, both of the Egyptian officials and of the people themselves, which would enable them in some degree to assimilate a system of administration, based on principles which, since the days of the Pharaohs, had been unfamiliar to the people of Egypt.

In the meanwhile, the pressing questions were. What could be done at once to enable the machine of the State to work, however inefficiently? What was to be the first step towards the inauguration of an improved system of government? How were the claims which had on all sides surged up against the Egyptian Treasury to be met?

There was but little difficulty in stating the main defect of the existing system, or in indicating in general terms the nature of the remedy which ought to be applied. "On ne saurait méconnaître," the Commissioners said, "que le Chef de l'État dispose d'une autorité sans limites." Manifestly, that was the main blot. The celebrated maxim attributed to Louis XIV. has never been more thoroughly carried out in practice than in Egypt under the reign of Ismail Pasha. He, in his own person, was the State. He disposed of the lives and properties of all his subjects. He constituted the sole and final court of appeal in all affairs, great or small. He administered in person every Department of the State. His will was law. His subordinates obeyed his every word implicitly. Ancient tradition and personal interest alike forbade an Egyptian official to question the wisdom of a decision emanating from a ruler, who could at pleasure dispose of the life and make or mar the fortune of any one of his subjects. All independence of thought and action was crushed out. Moreover, Ismail Pasha did more than rule. He afforded in his own person a striking example of what may result from concentrating in the hands of the ruler of the State functions which may more advantageously be left to private enterprise. He was the largest landed proprietor in Egypt. He was the only sugar manufacturer. He was a large shipowner. In fact, he was omnipresent. The task which he had undertaken would have taxed administrative abilities of the highest order. Ismail Pasha was a man of some natural ability, but he possessed neither the knowledge, nor the experience, nor the power of application necessary to govern successfully on his own principles.[1]

The result was that a state of affairs was produced such as that described in the report of the Commissioners. At the time they wrote, the whole machine of government was in danger of collapsing. It was useless to elaborate any minor reforms on paper, until steps had been taken to remedy the main defect of the system. It was clearly necessary to place some check on the arbitrary power of the Khedive. The principle of ministerial responsibility had to be enforced.

Another fundamental reform was also necessary before the foundations of an improved system of administration could be laid. So long as the revenues of the country remained at the disposal of a despotic and spendthrift ruler, no trustworthy forecast could be made of the liabilities of the State, and no reliance could be felt that revenues, which were intended by the Finance Minister to defray certain expenses, might not suddenly escape his grasp and be devoted to some wholly different object. Neglect to distinguish between the public revenues of the State and the private income of the Sovereign is a rock on which the Governments of other countries have foundered before the days of Ismail Pasha. Such a system must, in fact, lead to confusion in any country. Under a primitive and semi-barbarous Government, however, it may continue for a long while without producing a collapse of the whole machinery of the State. Unless resort be had to credit, a certain limit is of necessity imposed on the harm which can be inflicted by the most capricious despot. He cannot spend more money than he can obtain, and if he is unable to obtain more than the annual revenue which his country yields, with perhaps a certain limited amount taken in advance, the harm which can be done is not irremediable. Agriculture is the principal and, indeed, almost the only resource of most Asiatic States. Neither the devastation caused by war nor the evils resulting from the most gross forms of misgovernment can altogether ruin the agriculture of any country.[1] The *vis medicatrix naturae* soon repairs the harm which has been done, and leaves a fair field open for the future labours of some more intelligent ruler. But the maximum amount of harm is probably done when an Oriental ruler is for the first time brought in contact with the European system of credit. He then finds that he can obtain large sums of money with the utmost apparent facility. His personal wishes can thus be easily gratified. He is dazzled by the ingenious and often fallacious schemes for developing his country which European adventurers will not fail to lay before him in the most attractive light. He is too wanting in foresight to appreciate the nature of the future difficulties which he is creating for himself. The temptation to avail himself to the full of the benefits, which a reckless use of credit seems to offer to him, are too strong to be resisted. He will rush into the gulf which lies open before him, and inflict an injury on his country from which not only his contemporaries but future generations will suffer. This is what Ismail Pasha did. During the early years of his rule, Egypt must have been an earthly paradise for all who had money to lend at usurious rates of interest, or third-rate goods of which they wished to dispose at first-rate prices. I was not acquainted with Egyptian affairs in those halcyon days. I only arrived in Egypt at the moment when the second and inevitable stage on the road to ruin had been reached, and when it was no longer a question of spending money, but of repaying the money already borrowed and spent. Manifestly, the first step to avert further disaster was to prevent more wanton expenditure being incurred, and to obviate fresh abuses accruing from a system which had already inflicted such terrible injury on both the present and future generations of Egyptians. Egypt, it would appear, was to be civilised on a European model. So far, it had assimilated but too often those portions of the European system which were least suitable to an Oriental community, and least worthy of being copied.[1] It was now necessary that at least one cardinal principle of sound European administration should be enforced. The Khedive must accept a Civil List.[2] It should be fixed at a liberal rate, such as would harmonise with the pomp and luxury with which custom has surrounded Oriental rulers; but, when once fixed, it should be unalterable. The residue of the State revenues must for the future be applied by responsible ministers to objects in which the State, as distinguished from the ruler, possessed an evident interest.

---

[1] Compare Taine, *Ancien Régime*, p. 101. Speaking of the duties imposed on the King, he says: "En effet, par sa complication, son irrégularité, et sa grandeur, la machine échappe à ses prises. Un Frédéric II., levé à quatre heures du matin, un Napoléon qui dicte une partie de la nuit dans son bain et travaille dix-huit heures par jour, y suffiraient à peine. Un tel régime ne va point sans une attention toujours tendue, sans une énergie infatigable, sans un discernement infaillible, sans une sévérité militaire, sans un génie supérieur ; à ces conditions seulement on peut changer vingt-cinq millions d'hommes en automates, et substituer sa volonté partout lucide, partout cohérente, partout présente, à leurs volontés que l'on abolit."

What Louis XVI. was expected to do on a large scale in France, Ismail Pasha attempted to do on a small scale in Egypt. He naturally failed.

---

[1] See Mill's well-known remarks as to why agricultural countries recover so quickly from the effects of war (*Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 94).

---

[1] Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole says with truth, "The Eastern mind has an unequalled aptitude for assimilating the bad and rejecting the good in any system it meets."—*Studies in a Mosque*, p. 106.

[2] The acceptance of a Civil List by the Ruler of a misgoverned Oriental State is the first preliminary condition which must precede all other reforms. It would be difficult to insist too strongly on this point. In this connection, I may mention that Sir Edward Malet (*Shifting Scenes*, p. 95) states that, when he was in charge of the British Embassy at Constantinople in 1879, the Sultan had some idea of appointing an Englishman to be his Minister of Finance. Sir Edward

As a necessary consequence of the adoption of this system, the estates which had accumulated in the hands of the Khedive had to be handed over to the State. It was an abuse of words to call them private property. They had been bought with public money. It was impossible that any one individual could administer them efficiently. By ceding them, an asset would be obtained to satisfy the outstanding claims of creditors, whilst by the adoption of a system under which the estates could be gradually sold or farmed, great benefit would ultimately accrue to the country.

The Khedive and his family possessed 916,000 acres of land in Egypt. Of these, 485,000 acres were already mortgaged to the Daira creditors. The Khedive, anticipating the demand which was to be made on him, took the initiative during the course of the inquiry, and offered to cede to the State 289,000 acres of the 431,000 which remained to him. The estimated revenue of the lands which he proposed to cede amounted to £167,000

---

Malet communicated with me. He states, quite accurately, that I sent "a conditional acceptance, which enabled him to go so far as to submit my name to the Sultan." I may now add that the principal of my conditions was that the Sultan should accept a Civil List. I did not for one moment think that this condition would be accepted. My anticipations were realised. I never heard anything more of the matter.

Scarcely less important than the acceptance of a Civil List is the withdrawal of the Crown Domains from the personal administration of a despotic ruler. No one with any knowledge of the government of backward States could have imagined that the system adopted by King Leopold in connection with the administration of the Congo, would succeed. All the world now knows the results which that system has produced.

a year. That of the 142,000 acres which he proposed to retain amounted to £224,000 a year. The best lands would therefore, under this arrangement, have remained in the hands of the Khedivial family.

The Commissioners were not satisfied with this proposal. They demanded the cession of the whole of the property, rural as well as urban, belonging to the Khedivial family, of which the estimated net revenue was about £423,000 a year.

Such, therefore, were the conclusions to which four months of laborious inquiry had led. The confusion existing in the State accounts was so great, and the system of taxation so irregular, that it was as yet impossible to estimate accurately the resources of Egypt. Neither, indeed, could any general financial arrangement be proposed with advantage until the preliminary questions of principle, to which allusion is made above, were satisfactorily settled. These were, first, the enforcement of the principle of ministerial responsibility; and secondly, the acceptance by the Khedive of a fixed Civil List in lieu of the revenues derived from the properties which, it was demanded, should be yielded to the State.

The Commissioners sent in their report early in August. The Khedive was in doubt as to the line of conduct he should adopt. He was pressed by Nubar Pasha to accept the conclusions of the Commission. After a short period of hesitation, the Khedive yielded. In a speech addressed to Sir Rivers Wilson on August 23, he expressed himself in the following terms: "Quant aux conclusions auxquelles vous êtes arrivé, je les accepte; c'est tout naturel que je le fasse; c'est moi qui ai désiré ce travail pour le bien de mon pays. Il s'agit actuellement pour moi d'appliquer ces conclusions. Je suis résolu de la faire sérieusement, soyez-en convainçu. Mon pays n'est plus en Afrique; nous faisons partie de l Europe actuellement. Il est donc naturel pour nous d'abandonner les errements anciens pour adopter un système nouveau adapté à notre état social. Je crois que dans un avenir peu éloigné vous verrez des changements considérables. Ils seront amenés plus facilement qu'on ne le croit. Ce n'est au fond qu'une simple question de légalité, de respect à la loi. Il faut surtout ne pas se payer de mots, et pour moi je suis décidé à chercher la réalité des choses. Pour commencer et pour montrer à quel point je suis décidé, j'ai chargé Nubar Pacha de me former un Ministère. Cette innovation peut paraître de peu d'importance; mais de cette innovation, sérieusement conçue, vous verrez sortir l'indépendance ministérielle, et ce n'est pas peu; car cette innovation est le point de départ d'un changement de système, et, d'après moi, la meilleure assurance que je puisse donner du sérieux de mes intentions relativement à l'application de vos conclusions."[1]

A few days later (August 28), the Khedive addressed a letter to Nubar Pasha authorising him to form a Ministry. In this letter, the principle of Ministerial responsibility was reaffirmed. "Dorénavant," the Khedive said, "je veux gouverner avec et par mon Conseil des Ministres. . . . Les membres du Conseil des Ministres devront être tous solidaires les uns des autres; ce point est essentiel." The voice of the majority was to decide upon any question brought before the Council. The chief officials of the State were to be named by the Khedive acting on the advice of his Council of Ministers.

Nubar Pasha undertook the direction of the

---

[1] This speech had, of course, been prepared by Nubar Pasha for the Khedive.

Departments of Foreign Affairs and of Justice. Riaz Pasha was named Minister of the Interior.

It was, at the same time, decided to introduce an important change into the form in which European agency should be employed in the direction of Egyptian affairs. Only very limited executive functions had been vested in the two Controllers. It was now decided to appoint European Ministers. Thus, the European element was brought into direct contact with the population of the country, instead of acting, as heretofore, through the agency of Egyptian Ministers. Sir Rivers Wilson was named Minister of Finance, and M. de Blignières Minister of Public Works.

On October 29, a Khedivial Decree was issued ceding to the State most of the properties which had heretofore belonged to the Khedivial family, and authorising a loan of £8,500,000 to be raised on the security of those properties. They were to be administered by a Commission composed of an Egyptian, an Englishman, and a Frenchman. The two latter were to be selected by the British and French Governments respectively.

The negotiations which were undertaken with Messrs. Rothschild with a view to the issue of the new loan, delayed the arrival of Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières in Egypt. It was not till towards the close of November 1878 that they took up their duties.

# CHAPTER V

## THE FALL OF NUBAR PASHA

November 1878–February 1879

Difficult position of the new Ministry—Support of the British and French Governments—The Khedive declines all responsibility—Convocation of the Chamber of Notables—The principle of Ministerial responsibility—Contest between the Khedive and Nubar Pasha—The Khedive intrigues against the Ministry—Mutiny of the officers—It is quelled by the Khedive—Nubar Pasha resigns—Immediate consequences—Remote consequences—State of discipline of the army—The Khedive's responsibility for the mutiny.

The new Ministers had undertaken a heavy task. They had to deal not only with difficulties arising from a long course of misgovernment, but also with those due to the special circumstances of the moment. These latter were of a serious nature. The country was staggering under a load of debt which would, under normal circumstances, have taxed its resources to the utmost. Unfortunately, at this particular moment its resources fell below the normal level. The usual Nile flood had failed, and the failure produced the maximum amount of evil consequences, for the system of irrigation was conducted on unscientific principles; neither, although a contingency of this sort was of periodical recurrence, had any preparations been made to meet it. Moreover, the country had been exhausted by the endeavours made to pay the interest on the debt in the previous spring.

Further heavy payments were about to fall due. On October 15, 1878, the interest on the Preference Stock, amounting to £443,000, and on November 1, the interest of the Unified Debt, amounting to nearly £2,000,000, had to be paid. To meet these engagements there was, at the end of August, only £442,000 in the hands of the Commissioners of the Debt. The revenue of the first eight months of the year fell short of the receipts during the corresponding period of 1877 by £1,143,000.

The sinking fund of the Unified Debt was, with the consent of the Commissioners of the Debt, temporarily suspended. The relief afforded by this measure was, however, but slight. A sum of £1,260,000 had to be taken from the proceeds of the loan recently negotiated with Messrs. Rothschild in order to pay the interest on the Unified Debt. No sooner had the November coupon been paid, than attention was attracted to the difficulties of meeting the engagements falling due in the following spring. In fact, at this time the Egyptian Government lived from coupon to coupon. Large sums on account of land revenue are generally collected in Egypt during the months of November and December; yet by the end of the year, only £302,000 was in hand to meet a payment of nearly £2,000,000 falling due on May 1, 1879. To meet the coupon on the Preference Stock due on April 15, 1879, and amounting to £443,000, only £117,000 was received from the Railway Administration during the last two and a half months of 1878, although this period embraced the season which was usually the most productive of revenue. Well might Lord Vivian write: "These gloomy returns speak for themselves; they show that the financial position of the country is as bad as it can well be."

From one point of view, however, the new

Ministry began work under auspices which augured well for its success. It was warmly supported by both the British and French Governments. Nevertheless, two points were, from the first, clear. The first was that the new administration could not hope to work successfully unless it were cordially supported by the Khedive. The second was that the Khedive had reluctantly assented to the new order of things, and was inclined to afford a very lukewarm support to his Ministers. It was essential to do all that was possible to ensure his hearty co-operation. The following instructions were, therefore, addressed by Lord Salisbury to Lord Vivian: "In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government a very grave responsibility will rest with His Highness the Khedive for the success or failure of the new régime, especially as regards the collection of taxes. Rumours have already reached Her Majesty's Government which, if well founded, might cause them to apprehend that, under cover of the interference of foreign Governments, attempts will be made in high quarters to throw off all responsibility, a state of things that would soon be understood throughout the country generally. . . .

"Her Majesty's Government have full confidence in the resources of the country, and entertain no doubts as to the result of the new system, if it is only allowed to have a fair trial. But if it be opposed by those in power, or should they even show a disposition to throw discredit upon it, the difficulties of Nubar Pasha and his advisers will be enormously increased, and the responsibility for their failure will involve its promoters in the disastrous consequences that must result."

M. Godeaux, who had taken Baron des Michels' place in Egypt, gave a similar warning to the Khedive on behalf of the French Government.

When these messages were delivered to the Khedive, he "showed evident signs of great annoyance, and regretted that Her Majesty's Government should have thought it necessary to hold language to him which he thought was undeserved and unjust." The responsibility which it was sought to throw on him was, the Khedive thought, neither just nor logical. What was his position in Egypt? He had deliberately accepted the position of a constitutional ruler. A responsible Ministry had been formed to advise him. "If he rightly understood the first principles of constitutional government, it was that Ministers, and not the chief of the State, were made responsible." He must decline to meddle with the functions of his Ministers. His advice or opinion was at their disposal if they chose to ask him for it, but he could not thrust it upon them unasked. If the Ministers were not responsible for their own acts, what was the meaning of a responsible Ministry? Responsibility, he thought, would only attach to him if he attempted to interfere in the government of the country. Otherwise, he must disclaim it.

To all this sophistry Lord Vivian replied, with obvious good sense, that "His Highness must remember that, although he had surrendered his personal power, and a constitutional régime was established in Egypt, the new order of things was in its infancy, and it was rather too early for the strict application of the doctrines of constitutional government as understood in Europe. His Highness had still all the prestige and influence of the chief of an Eastern State, combined with greater knowledge and experience of Egypt than those of any other person. What Her Majesty's Government desired was that, instead of showing indifference, coldness, or even dislike to the new order of things, he should place all his knowledge, influence, and experience at the disposal of his Ministers, and loyally and cordially co-operate with them within the proper sphere of his prerogative. A moral responsibility devolved on him for any hostile action that might tend to thwart the new Ministry."

The Khedive's words were ominous. They gave the keynote of what was to follow. The British and French Governments had wished for constitutional government in Egypt. He had complied with their wishes. He would now stand aside whilst the game of constitutional government was being played out. It would soon be found that, without his powerful aid, the country could not be governed at all. If, however, constitutional government was to be tried, he would be thoroughly constitutional. He would leave his Ministers to their own devices, but he could not consent to the imposition of any fresh taxes without ascertaining the will of the people. In 1866, a Chamber of Notables had been created, mainly with a view to throwing dust in the eyes of Europe. The Khedive was fully alive to the fact that, in the then existing condition of affairs in Egypt, the mediæval Italian proverb—*chi dice parlamento, dice guastamento*—applied with full force. He had, therefore, maintained the Chamber in a condition of perfect subserviency to himself. At the time about which I am writing, it had fallen into complete obscurity. It was now to be convoked with a view to the consideration of certain financial proposals, notably the increase in the Ouchouri land-tax,[1] "by which the richer class of proprietors are assessed at rates below the present value of their lands, which have been much improved by cultivation." This was constitutionalism with a vengeance, for the Ouchouri landowners were strongly represented in the Chamber, and they would not fail to throw on the new Ministry the odium resulting from an increase of taxation, which would fall on the class to which they mainly belonged. Neither would they be pleased by a measure then under discussion and subsequently adopted, under which cultivators residing on Ouchouri lands would no longer, as heretofore, be exempted from their share of the corvée.

---

[1] The Ouchouri landowners answered, to a great extent, to the Indian jaghirdars. They held fiefs at low rents.

As has been already explained, the principle of ministerial responsibility had been accepted by the Khedive. There were, however, two different methods of giving effect to that principle.

One was to exclude the Khedive altogether from the meetings of the Council of Ministers, to treat him as a cipher, and to endeavour to govern the country, not only without his co-operation, but often in a manner which was diametrically opposed to his personal wishes and opinions. This system, which involved pushing the principle of ministerial responsibility to its extreme logical limit, was advocated by Nubar Pasha, who was supported by Sir Rivers Wilson. Arguments not wanting in weight could be advanced in its favour. The presence of the Khedive at the Council of Ministers was, it was maintained, incompatible with free discussion, which often turned either upon questions affecting His Highness personally, or upon the errors and abuses of the past, for which he was principally responsible. Even the appearance of restoring to him any part of the power of which he had been shorn would, it was argued, have a bad effect in the country, and induce the Egyptians to think that he was still all-powerful.

This position was perfectly logical; neither, in explaining the causes of Nubar Pasha's attitude, is it necessary to assume that personal ambition and love of power were the motives which prompted him. Without doubt, in attempting to put the Khedive altogether aside, Nubar Pasha thought that he was rendering a real service to his adopted country. Nubar Pasha, although somewhat of a doctrinaire, was an earnest reformer. Moreover, his versatile intellect was capable of grasping a principle. In this case, he had got hold of a principle which was unquestionably sound. His French education, which tended to engender in his mind a somewhat uncompromising attitude on matters of theory, coupled with a certain inaptitude to seize the springs of action which move individuals as well as Governments, conspired to convince him that the principle should be driven home to its logical conclusion. Loyalty to a colleague, personal friendship, respect for Nubar Pasha's abilities, consideration for his superior local knowledge, and a vivid realisation of the harm done by Ismail Pasha's abuse of personal power, all rendered it natural that Sir Rivers Wilson should follow in the same track.

The alternative system, which was supported by Lord Vivian, was less theoretically perfect, but was in a greater degree based on the actual circumstances then existing in Egypt. Lord Vivian thought that Nubar Pasha had overrated his own strength and underrated the power of the Khedive. That power was still an important factor in the government of a country which he and his predecessors had ruled for so long and in so absolute a fashion. The Khedive was the only authority recognised and obeyed by all classes in the land. There was no middle course between deposing him or counting with his power. The only system which presented a chance of success was not to put the Khedive on one side altogether, but to invite his co-operation, whilst at the same time the exercise of his authority would be controlled.

My own views were expressed on February 17, 1879,—the day before the mutiny of the officers to which allusion will presently be made,—in the following terms: "The transition from a purely personal government by the Khedive to a government by an executive council, whose leading members are aliens and Christians, has been too rapid. For some time to come, it will be impossible not to take into account the personal authority of the Khedive as an element in the government of the country; he will always possess a large influence, which, if it be not used for good, will almost certainly be used for bad; I therefore think it desirable to consider the best method of giving the Khedive some practical share in the government of the country."

Whatever defects, however, may have existed in the methods of giving effect to a policy of reform, it was certain that the Ministry of Nubar Pasha represented the cause of progress and civilisation. The ultimate consequences of its fall might, and probably would be serious in so far as the Khedive was personally concerned. But the Khedive, true to the traditions of his previous life, took little heed of ultimate consequences. In the meanwhile, the immediate issue of the struggle between the Khedive and Nubar Pasha could scarcely be doubtful. Nubar Pasha was at a great disadvantage. On the one side, was a ruler who was feared and obeyed, who disposed absolutely of the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and who could readily divert the rising tide of popular discontent from his own person and turn it against his Ministers. On the other side, was a Minister who was not only a Christian and associated with other European Christians, but who also belonged to a nationality against which the Mohammedan population of the Ottoman Empire is greatly prejudiced. "When an Armenian rules," says the Turkish proverb, "the State decays."[1] Nubar Pasha carried but little weight with the Egyptian population, with whom, moreover, owing to his ignorance of Arabic, he was unable to communicate in their own language. He could only rely on persuasion and on the support of two foreign Governments. This support, although heartily accorded,[2] did him in some respects more harm than good. Under these circumstances, his eventual fall from power was almost a foregone conclusion.

The crisis did not, however, arise at once. For a few months, the new machine of government worked, although with great friction. The Khedive frequently complained that the anomalous position in which it was sought to place him was daily becoming more and more intolerable, and that, whilst he was not consulted about the measures of his Ministers, at the same time the British and French Governments held him responsible for their result. On the other hand, Nubar Pasha was "evidently discouraged and dissatisfied." "Nous tournons," he said, "dans un cercle vicieux. Nous ne marchons pas."

In the meanwhile, there was good reason for believing that the Khedive was actively intriguing against his Ministers. "There is," Lord Vivian wrote on January 11, "a certain amount of fermentation in the country as evidenced by the arrival of large deputations of Sheikhs from the provinces to protest against any pressure for the payment of taxes at this moment, and I am told that there is a probability of opposition in the Chamber of Delegates to the proposition that is to be submitted to them by the Government for an increase of the Ouchouri tax, which falls especially upon the richer class of proprietors. If this fermentation were natural, it would not be an unhealthy symptom, but I have good reason to suspect that it has been secretly fomented by agents, probably employed by the Khedive; and I hear from a reliable source that the leading men of the Chamber of Notables have been secretly convoked and told that the Khedive would not be displeased to see them oppose the measures of an administration which was imposed upon him, and which was entirely in the hands of Europeans.

---

[1] *Ermeni vizir, devlet düsher.* Some of the more superstitious followers of Islam are said to derive a certain amount of consolation from the fact that Armenians have occasionally occupied high posts in the service of their hereditary enemy, Russia.

[2] It has been occasionally stated that if Lord Vivian had supported Nubar Pasha more cordially, he might have been maintained in power. Such is not my opinion. Lord Vivian's instructions were clear, and he acted loyally upon them.

"Thus, in addition to their serious financial difficulties, and to the task of attempting to create order out of chaos, the new Ministry have to struggle, not only with open enemies, but with internal treachery of the most dangerous description, carried on in spite of serious warning."

Under circumstances such as these, it only required the occurrence of some adventitious incident to bring about a crisis. No long delay intervened before such an incident occurred. It was, however, unfortunate that it happened in that branch of the State administration which, perhaps less than any other, can be infected with disease without producing after-effects of a serious nature. Hitherto, Egypt had suffered mainly from fiscal misgovernment. The only sound part of the system was that public tranquillity had been preserved, and, whatever may be thought of the methods by which it had been preserved, every one but a devotee of the sacred right of revolution would prefer order of some sort to complete anarchy. The security, which had so far reigned, was now to be disturbed. The financial embarrassments of Egypt were great. To these was now to be superadded the disquietude produced by a mutinous army.

Great discontent had been produced amongst the officers of the army owing to the non-payment of their salaries. The new Ministry decided to pay a portion of the arrears due. At the same time, a large number of officers were placed on half-pay. This measure would, under any circumstances, have been considered harsh, however necessary it might have been in view of the straitened condition of the Egyptian Treasury. It was, however, especially harsh and impolitic to dismiss so large a body of officers without, in the first place, fully liquidating the arrears of pay due to them. The result was that many officers and their families were reduced to a state of complete destitution.

When this measure was adopted, there were about 500 officers in Cairo; but at this moment, Lord Vivian reported, "by an unparalleled act of folly, the Minister of War summoned the remaining 2000 officers up to Cairo from various parts of the country to receive a portion of their arrears of pay and to deposit their arms with the authorities. He thus grouped together a seething mass of 2500 discontented officers, the garrison of Cairo consisting only of 2600 troops, a large proportion of whom had undoubted sympathy with the grievances of the mutineers."

On the morning of February 18, as Nubar Pasha and Sir Rivers Wilson were driving to their offices, they were mobbed by a crowd of officers armed with swords, and taken out of their carriages. After being subjected to some rough treatment, they were dragged to the Ministry of Finance, which was close to the scene of the outrage, where they were shut in by the mutineers, who cut the telegraph wires. Means were, however, found to communicate with Lord Vivian, who at once had an interview with the Khedive. What followed may best be related in Lord Vivian's words. "The Khedive," he reported, "drove with me to the Ministry of Finance, which we found besieged by a large crowd, who, however, made way respectfully for the Khedive's carriage, and cheered him. In a room on the upper floor, surrounded by the rioters, we found Nubar Pasha, Sir Rivers Wilson, and Riaz Pasha, none of them really hurt, although the two former had received very rough treatment while they were being forced from the street into the building. The Khedive, having assured himself of their safety, turned to the rioters and ordered them to leave the building on his promise that their just demands should be satisfied. 'If,' he said, 'you are my officers, you are bound by your oath to obey me; if you refuse, I will have you swept away.' They obeyed him, although reluctantly and with some murmuring, begging him to leave them to settle their accounts in their own way. There were also cries of 'Death to the dogs of Christians.' His Highness got them down the stairs and into and beyond the courtyard, where they fell back on the larger body who were besieging the gates. The Khedive commanded all of them to disperse and go to their homes, and on their refusal to do so, he ordered up the troops. They fired in the air, but a few soldiers were wounded by the mutineers' revolvers, and a few of the rioters received bayonet wounds. The

Khedive's chamberlain was wounded while at His Highness's side by a sabre-cut from one of the mutineers, and the Khedive himself ran considerable risk. The whole affair lasted about half-an-hour, and the Khedive, after providing for the safe escort of the Ministers, returned to the Palace. Sir Rivers Wilson behaved well throughout the affair, which he might have avoided had he not gone to Nubar Pasha's assistance, when he saw him surrounded by the mob."

On the following morning (February 19), a meeting took place at Lord Vivian's house, at which M. Godeaux, Sir Rivers Wilson, M. de Blignières, and myself were present. Lord Vivian stated that the Khedive had on the previous day made a declaration to the Consular body to the effect that his position must be changed, and his proper share of power restored to him, or he would not be answerable for the maintenance of public order. It was decided to ask the Khedive to state in what respects he wished his position to be modified.

We then drove to the Palace. Nubar Pasha, Sir Rivers Wilson, M. de Blignières, and myself remained in a room on the ground floor, while Lord Vivian and M. Godeaux had an interview with the Khedive upstairs. In a short while, they reappeared and communicated the Khedive's reply. His Highness stated "unequivocally that he would not be responsible for public tranquillity unless he were given his proper share in the government of the country, and was allowed either to preside at the Council of Ministers himself, or to select a President in whom he could have confidence. He further required, as a *sine qua non* condition, that Nubar Pasha, whom he accused of sapping and undermining his authority, should immediately retire from the Ministry." Nubar Pasha was asked whether, in the event of the Consuls-General insisting on his remaining in office, he would guarantee the public safety. He naturally declined to give any such guarantee. "The only course," he said, "left open to him under the circumstances was to tender his resignation, which he begged Lord Vivian and M. Godeaux as a favour to place in the Khedive's hands, with a request that he should be allowed to live unmolested as a private individual in Egypt." To this request, the Khedive consented, "on the condition that Nubar Pasha did not intrigue or meddle in politics."

Thus the struggle between the Khedive and Nubar Pasha was brought to a close. The attempt to govern Egypt whilst Ismail Pasha was Khedive, without allowing him any participation in the government of the country, had signally failed. Tried in the manner which has been described above, the failure of the experiment was certain. Indeed, looking back on the events of that time after an interval of many years, my principal feeling is one of surprise that any one should for a moment have thought that, under these conditions, the experiment could possibly have succeeded. Nubar Pasha's fall from power was inevitable.

The circumstances narrated in this chapter produced important changes, some immediate and others more remote.

The immediate consequence was that the position of the European Ministers was shaken, and that before long they were dismissed from office.

The remote consequences were of even greater importance. The officers of the army had, in the first instance, been unjustly treated. They were not paid the money which was due to them. So long as their complaints were put forward in a manner to which no exception could be taken, they remained unheeded. At last, they mutinied.

They then obtained what they wanted.[1] A public apology was tendered to Sir Rivers Wilson by Prince Hassan, the Khedive's son and the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army, for the insults and ill-treatment to which he had been subjected. But, although the ringleaders of the mutiny were arrested, and some inquiry into their conduct was instituted, they were speedily released. Indeed, under the circumstances which then existed, it would have been difficult to have subjected them to any punishment without incurring serious risks. It is impossible to treat any armed body of men after this fashion with impunity. The discipline of the Egyptian army was profoundly shaken. The most humble private soldier discovered, for the first time, probably to his own exceeding astonishment, that he and his comrades were masters of the situation, if, with muskets in their hands, they exerted themselves to coerce the civil elements of society. History affords abundant proofs of the ease with which this lesson is learnt. It was not to be unlearnt until a stronger race of soldiers appeared on Egyptian soil. The mutiny of 1879 was the direct precursor of the Arábi revolt. It would be going too far to say that from this moment a foreign occupation of Egypt became inevitable, but it is certainly a fact that the mutiny which led to the downfall of Nubar Pasha greatly increased the difficulties of governing the country, and brought the prospects of foreign intervention of a decisive nature appreciably nearer.

---

[1] At the time of the mutiny, the Treasury chest was empty. It was imperative to pay the officers, who then held the town of Cairo at their mercy, but considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining the money. I remember being present at an interview between Sir Rivers Wilson and the representative of a local bank, who offered to advance money at an exorbitant rate of interest. Sir Rivers Wilson showed a moral courage after the riot as conspicuous as the physical courage he had displayed whilst the riot was taking place. He declined to accept the offer which was made to him, and he also refused to revert to the pernicious system of taking the taxes in advance, although the adoption of this measure was pressed upon him. Eventually, Messrs. Rothschild advanced £400,000, which was repaid from the loan funds, and the officers were paid.

There is one further point which calls for remark before leaving the history of this period. An opinion was at the time generally entertained that Ismail Pasha was privy to the mutiny of the officers, and, in fact, that the whole affair was an intrigue got up by the Khedive himself. It is a dangerous thing for a despotic ruler, who depends wholly on force for the maintenance of his power, to encourage a mutiny in his own army, even although he may himself sympathise with the objects of the mutineers. The spirit of mutiny, when once raised, may not improbably turn against the individual who raised it. Nevertheless, unwise though a policy of this sort would have been, there is no inherent improbability in such a dangerous agency as a mutinous soldiery being used by an Eastern ruler, who, in spite of an acute and subtle intellect, was singularly lacking in foresight, who was smarting under the humiliation of a loss of power, and who had unbounded confidence in his ability to rule, by his own drastic methods, the generally docile races who inhabit the valley of the Nile. Any opinion, however, of the degree to which Ismail Pasha was privy to the mutiny must be little more than conjecture. It is impossible to adduce positive proof that he knew anything precise of the intended outrage on Nubar Pasha and Sir Rivers Wilson. The alarm he displayed at the spirit of disorder which had been evoked was perhaps genuine. It is, indeed, more than probable that, when the officers assembled near the Ministry of Finance on the morning of February 18, they had not devised amongst themselves any very definite plan of action. Nevertheless, it would in any case be incorrect to say that the responsibility for the outrage does not rest on Ismail Pasha. On the contrary, he was, without doubt, morally responsible for it.[1] It does not require either a very vivid imagination or any great acquaintance with Eastern politics to form a fairly accurate idea of what must have taken place. I can best describe my own conjecture on the subject by an analogy drawn from a well-known incident in English history.

When Henry II. wished to get rid of Thomas à Becket he said, in the presence of his court, "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" and forthwith four knights were found who possibly went beyond their master's wishes, and rid him of the Archbishop in the rude but effectual manner of the twelfth century. Ismail Pasha's language and intentions were, without doubt, more in conformity with the civilised age in which we live than those of Henry II., but his procedure was based on the same principles as those of the English king. He spoke openly of the dislike which he entertained towards Nubar Pasha and his European Ministers. He represented his position as intolerable. In an Eastern country, this was enough to focus on the Ministry the responsibility for all the evils which then afflicted Egypt. The officers of the army were discontented. They attributed the miserable condition in which they were placed to the action of Nubar Pasha and his colleagues, who were aliens and Christians. They learnt that their ruler, who was of their own race and faith, and to whom they had been accustomed to yield implicit obedience, was as hostile as they were to the new

---

[1] It has been stated on good authority that a few days before the mutiny, Shahin Pasha spoke to the Khedive about the grievances of the officers, and that the latter replied: "Pourquoi les officiers restent-ils tranquilles?" If this be true, it is quite sufficient to account for the outbreak.

Ministry, and would be pleased if means could be found to bring about its downfall. That was enough. They naturally mutinied, and in doing so they, without doubt, thought that they were not only furthering their own interests, but also that they were acting in a manner which would obtain the commendation of their Sovereign.

This is a sufficient and highly probable explanation of the causes which led to the mutiny. It is scarcely worth while to seek for any other.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE COUP D'ÉTAT

APRIL 1879

Triumph achieved by Ismail Pasha — His parliamentary projects — Necessity of maintaining the reformed administration—Attempts to reinstate Nubar Pasha—Relations between the Khedive and the new Ministry—Position of the British and French Governments—Common policy — Different methods of executing the policy — Dissensions at Cairo — Position of Prince Tewfik — Mistaken principles of the new Ministry—The payment of the coupon on the 1864 loan—The Khedive prepares a separate financial scheme—Dismissal of the Ministers—Proposal to revive the Control—Letter of the Khedive to Chérif Pasha—Character of the new Ministers—Comments on the Khedive's proceedings.

The Khedive had obtained a considerable triumph. He had got rid of a Minister who was distasteful to him, although the latter had been supported by two powerful foreign Governments. He had shown all the world that, without his co-operation, Egypt could not be governed. The theory of ministerial responsibility might be sound, but the personal power of a despotic ruler in an Oriental State was a practical fact, which had to be taken into account in the application of the best of theories.

If Ismail Pasha had been content with what he had achieved, and had from this time forth worked loyally with his European Ministers, he might possibly have died Khedive of Egypt. But it was one of the characteristics of this singular man that, although he had a quick perception in dealing with points of minor importance, he erred at almost every important crisis of his career. He was unable to frame a correct estimate of the main factors in a general political situation. He was wanting in the power described by the Duke of Wellington, as "guessing at what is going on on the other side of the hill." His political forecasts were singularly faulty. He would frequently show great acuteness in deciding on some matter of detail, but would generally make a mistake on a broad question of principle. Lord Palmerston once said that if a little learning was a dangerous thing, no learning at all was much more dangerous, and so, without doubt, it generally is. But Ismail Pasha was a living proof that there is a good deal of truth in the words of the English poet. He would probably have fared better if he had never made any attempt either to understand European politics or to gauge European public opinion. As it was, he had just sufficient knowledge of these subjects to lead him astray. He knew that Europeans laid much stress on the will of the people. They had large talking assemblies, termed Parliaments, to whose will Kings and Emperors were obliged to conform. Such institutions were, of course, wholly unsuitable to Egypt. Nevertheless, would it not be possible to hoist these Franks with their own petard? It was, indeed, difficult to deal with the French. They scarcely made a pretence of caring for anything but the interests of the French creditors. It was true that, but a short time previously, he had declared that the country was bankrupt, but circumstances altered cases. Egypt had vast resources. Huge sums had before now been screwed out of the unfortunate peasantry. Let him regain his personal power, and adopt his own rude methods for collecting the revenue. A few extra blows of the courbash would produce financial equilibrium. Thus would he conjure French opposition.

The case of the English was different. They cared, or at all events they pretended to care for the welfare of the fellaheen. They disliked to hear of oppression even in the cause of the bondholders. Lectures on this subject had been frequently delivered to him by meddling Consuls-General and by the misguided humanitarian press of England. But the English were an essentially gullible race. They had, at a recent period of their history, got embroiled with the half of Europe because they sympathised with oppressed nationalities, and believed that parliamentary institutions, trial by jury, and the like, were certain remedies for all the maladies with which States, in whatsoever part of the world, were afflicted.[1] They were easily carried away by phrases such as the popular will, constitutional government, and so on. Moreover, the English were a stiff-necked people who would not easily be led by officials. On the contrary, they as often as not thought that, when they had paid their officials high salaries for looking after their interests in a foreign country, they had done enough. They were under no obligation to accept as correct what their representatives said. Indeed, they were at that time rather inclined to disbelieve their officials because they were officials, and, therefore, presumably devoid of popular sympathies.[2] With a people such as this, a great deal might be done. Might not an acute ruler so adapt his language as to suit a foreign public, whilst his acts would be in strict conformity with his own wishes and personal interests? The British Government must not be openly defied. That would be a proceeding both clumsy and attended with some risk. Belial was a wiser councillor than Moloch. But surely if a scheme were devised which would present matters to the British Government and public in a form to which they were accustomed, if their most cherished institutions were apparently copied in Egypt, if the Egyptian people were to express their own views through their own representatives, then the bait would take. An Egyptian Parliament should, therefore, be assembled. The representatives of the Egyptian people should express their devotion to the Khedive, and their satisfaction with his system of government. They would reject as insulting the imputation that the country was bankrupt. They would demur to the changes in the system of taxation proposed by the European advisers of their Sovereign. Those changes were unjust, and, moreover, it was an incidental point of some importance that, under the European proposals, the fresh taxation would fall on the representatives themselves rather than on the people whom, by a bold flight of the imagination, they were presumed to represent. But they would devise another system which would be more equitable. The representatives of the people, who were rich, should preserve their former privileges, but they would make large sacrifices in order to enable Egypt to meet its financial engagements. It was true that those sacrifices would fall, not on themselves, but on their fellow-countrymen in more humble classes of society. But the result would be the same. The interest of the debt would be paid. The members of the Egyptian Parliament must be left to devise their own scheme. That was essential.

---

[1] "Lord Palmerston, in the most insolent manner, told the Greek Minister that he might tell the King of Greece that he never should have a moment's peace or quiet until he gave his subjects a constitution; that he, Lord Palmerston, would take care that neither he nor any other Sovereign who governed without a constitution should have any peace; that all people so governed had a right to 'insurger,' and he took good care to let them know that such was his opinion" (Sir Robert Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 178). The passage is contained in a letter written in 1839 by "a lady unnamed in the Whig camp."

[2] It must be borne in mind that I am speaking of a period before the birth of modern Imperialism. Since 1876, the general tone of British public opinion has undergone many notable changes.

Otherwise, constitutional government would be a mere farce. Their patriotism would revolt at the idea of any foreign interference. For the future, it must cease. The European Ministers must be dismissed.

When all this was done, it would not be necessary to talk any more of Parliaments or of popular representation. The necessity for their existence would have passed away. An intelligent despot ruling over a docile people would easily find some means for preventing parliamentary institutions from taking any solid root in the country. The personal rule of the Khedive would be restored. The people, who had before been scourged with rods, would in future be scourged with scorpions. The bondholders would be paid, and no one would be able to complain.

Thus Ismail Pasha pondered over things which were never destined to be accomplished.

The idea was ingenious, but the circumstances under which the experiment was tried were unfavourable to success. Ismail Pasha was too well known in Europe to play the part of an ultra-constitutional monarch. The most ardent partisan of parliamentary institutions, however ill-informed about Eastern politics, whilst yielding a ready assent to the principles involved, would not be able to refrain from some scepticism as regards the intentions of the principal character in the piece. Moreover, there were at the time in Cairo a number of European officials of inconveniently independent characters, who had some knowledge of the country, and who would certainly make their voices heard. They, at least, would be thrown into strong opposition. They knew too much to be taken in by this flimsy travesty of free institutions. Indeed, had not the interests involved, both European and Egyptian, been so serious, they would almost certainly have regarded the whole proceeding not merely as a comedy, but as a screaming farce. Further, the whole project was tainted by one irremediable defect. It was based on the assumption that money would be forthcoming to satisfy the claims of the foreign creditors. Now, in supposing that, by whatsoever means, he could meet all his financial engagements, Ismail Pasha erred. He forgot to make sure of his foundations before erecting his superstructure.

When Nubar Pasha was forced to resign, Lord Vivian pointed out that "the incident would become still more serious if it were to shake the experiment of reformed government in Egypt, which should certainly be maintained, only with far more consideration than has been shown for the feelings, rights, and prejudices of the natives."

Lord Vivian had indicated the main danger of the moment. The reformed administration must be supported. Lord Vivian was, therefore, instructed "to state to the Khedive that the French and British Governments were determined to act in concert in all that concerned Egypt, and that they could not lend themselves to any modification in principle of the political and financial arrangements recently sanctioned by His Highness. It was to be clearly understood that the resignation of Nubar Pasha had, in the eyes of both Governments, only importance so far as the question of persons was concerned, but that it could not imply a change of system." Similar instructions were sent by the French Government to their representative in Cairo.

On the Khedive being informed of the tenor of these instructions, he replied "that he would pledge himself to maintain intact the engagements he had taken in August last, and which constituted the charter of the new scheme of administrative reform.[1] With respect to his financial engagements, he could assure the two Consuls-General of his sincere desire to observe them, but he could not prejudice the decisions of his Council of Ministers on this point."

Nothing could be fairer or more constitutional. The principles of the reformed administration were to be maintained. As regards the financial engagements, the Khedive could obviously give no promise. All the world, in fact, knew by this time that the arrangements made in November 1876 would have to be modified. A month previously, Lord Vivian had reported that "frequent meetings were being held between Sir Rivers Wilson, M. de Blignières, and Sir Evelyn Baring, with the object of arriving at some joint conclusions as to the basis upon which a general and equitable arrangement, amounting to a composition of the present financial difficulties of the Egyptian Government, was possible."

Two important questions then had to be decided. The first was, who was to be the new Prime Minister. The second was the nature of the relations between the Khedive and his new Ministry.

Sir Rivers Wilson pressed for the reinstatement of Nubar Pasha. He was supported by the British Government. "Her Majesty's Government," Lord Salisbury said, "are of opinion that the position of Sir Rivers Wilson will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to maintain, unless Nubar Pasha is readmitted to the Cabinet in some form or other."

Lord Vivian, however, did not concur in this opinion. "I desire," he wrote, "to place on record my strong conviction that Nubar Pasha's idea of maintaining two distinct and probably antagonistic powers in the State (the Khedive and the Council of Ministers) will prove impracticable as long as the present Khedive remains in power. . . . Any proposal for the re-entry of Nubar Pasha into the Cabinet, after what has happened, would be, I fear, in every respect a serious mistake that might lead to difficulties and complications, which Her Majesty's Government would wish to avoid."

---

[1] *Vide ante*, pp. 61-63.

When the Khedive was addressed on the subject, he said that "he could not do otherwise than bow to the will of the English and French Governments, which he had no power to resist, if they persisted in their demand for the re-entry of Nubar Pasha; but he felt bound to warn them beforehand of the consequences, so that they might not blame him hereafter if the new order of things should break down, or if disturbances should again arise."

It was clear that, if Nubar Pasha were forced upon the Khedive, another and perhaps more serious breakdown would ensue. The French Government, therefore, suggested that it might not be advisable to insist on his readmission. The British Government assented, but they "accompanied the concession with a warning to the Khedive that they considered His Highness responsible for the recent difficulties in Egypt, and that if similar difficulties should occur again, the consequences would be very serious to him."

Concurrently with the discussion of the question of Nubar Pasha's readmission to the Cabinet, the relations which were to subsist between the Khedive and his Ministers were considered afresh. The Khedive made certain proposals. The European Ministers made counter-proposals. Eventually, the British and French Governments decided on the following programme:—(1) The Khedive was not in any case to be present at Cabinet Councils. (2) Prince Tewfik, the heir-apparent to the Khedivate, who had been proposed by the Khedive himself, was to be appointed President of the Council. (3) The English and French members of the Cabinet were to have a right of veto over any proposed measure.

On these proposals being laid before the Khedive, he said that "he unreservedly subscribed to all the conditions imposed by the Governments of England and France, more especially as they had listened to his objections against the re-entry of Nubar Pasha into the Cabinet, for which he expressed his gratitude. He fully acknowledged the very serious responsibility that now devolved upon him for the success of the new order of things and for the prevention of disorder, and he pledged his cordial and loyal support to his Ministers if, as he hoped, they would meet him in the same conciliatory spirit."

It appeared, therefore, that the difficulties in the way of the formation of a new Ministry were at an end. On March 10, Prince Tewfik was nominated President of the Council. When, however, the question arose of filling up the remaining places in the Cabinet, fresh dissensions broke out between the Khedive and his European Ministers. Under the Ministry of Nubar Pasha, Riaz Pasha had been in charge of the Department of the Interior. The Khedive now wished to transfer Riaz Pasha to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Justice. The European Ministers objected to this transfer, on the ground that the Khedive's object was to regain his hold over the provinces, which would be impossible so long as a man of such independent character as Riaz Pasha was Minister of the Interior. Lord Vivian and M. Godeaux, on the other hand, considered that it would be inconsistent with the personal responsibility thrown on the Khedive to dictate to him the choice of his Ministers and the posts they should occupy. The British and French Governments, however, more especially the former, supported the views of Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières. The Khedive was pressed to maintain Riaz Pasha at the Ministry of the Interior. He at first declined to do so, but eventually gave a reluctant assent. On March 22, after the country had remained for a month without a Ministry, Riaz Pasha was named Minister of the Interior and of Justice. The remaining places in the Cabinet were easily filled up,

At the same time, a letter was addressed by the Khedive to Prince Tewfik, embodying the principles which were to regulate the relations between the Khedive and his Ministers. "J'espère," the Khedive added, "que ces nouveaux arrangements assureront la marche de la nouvelle organisation, dont la réussite doit amener un grand bien pour l'Égypte. Le Cabinet peut être assuré qu'en toutes circonstances il peut compter de ma part sur le concours le plus complet et le plus loyal, comme je compte moi-même sur son dévouement à l'œuvre que nous poursuivons en commun."

During these discussions, the British and French Governments had been in a difficult position. The general political interest of England was clear. England did not want to possess Egypt, but it was essential to British interests that the country should not fall into the hands of any other European Power. British policy in respect to Egypt had for years past been based on this principle. In 1857, the Emperor Napoleon III. made overtures to the British Government with a view to the partition of the northern portions of Africa. Morocco was to fall to France, Tunis to Sardinia, and Egypt to England.[1] On this proposal being submitted to Lord Palmerston, he stated his views in a letter to Lord Clarendon. "It is very possible," he said, "that many parts of the world would be better governed by France, England, and Sardinia than they are now. . . . We do not want to have Egypt. What we wish about Egypt is that it should continue to be attached to the Turkish Empire, which is a security against its belonging to any European Power. We want to trade with Egypt, and to travel through Egypt, but we do not want the burthen of governing Egypt. . . . Let us try to improve all those countries by the general influence of our commerce, but let us abstain from a crusade of conquest which would call down upon us the condemnation of all other civilised nations."[1]

---

[1] The accuracy of this statement is confirmed by M. Emile Ollivier, who speaks with authority on the subject. See his *L'Empire Libéral,* vol. iii. p. 418.

The general aims of British policy in 1879 were much the same as they had been when Lord Palmerston wrote these lines twenty-two years previously; but, with a change of circumstances, the method of giving effect to the policy had necessarily to be modified. It was no longer possible to stand aside and neglect the internal affairs of Egypt. The only European Power which was likely to obtain a footing in Egypt was France. The attempt had already been made once, and the misgovernment of Egypt might well lead to its being renewed, more especially as large French financial interests, to which the French Government were prepared to afford support, were concerned. Even admitting, as was without doubt the case, that the French Government had at that time no designs involving the annexation of Egypt, the pressure of public opinion was so great that it would have been scarcely possible for France to have adopted a policy of complete non-intervention. If the British Government would not act with them, the French Government would have been obliged to act alone.

---

[1] Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 125. I cannot refrain from adding the following characteristic passage: "On one occasion to Lord Cowley, he (Lord Palmerston) used a very homely but apt illustration. 'We do not want Egypt,' he said, 'or wish it for ourselves, any more than any rational man with an estate in the north of England and a residence in the south would have wished to possess the inns on the north road. All he could want would have been that the inns should be well-kept, always accessible, and furnishing him, when he came, with mutton-chops and post-horses.'"

French policy in respect to Egypt was, in most essential points, the counterpart of the policy of the British Government. It was impossible to adopt a policy of annexation, even had there been any disposition in that direction, without incurring the risk, amounting almost to a certainty, of a serious quarrel with England. But France regarded the exclusive action of England in Egypt with the same jealousy as that with which England would have regarded exclusively French action. Any extension of Turkish influence ran counter to the traditional policy of France. It was clearly in the interests of both Governments to prevent the affairs of Egypt from becoming a cause of serious dissension between them. Both had equal interests in the maintenance of the peace of Europe. It was obviously undesirable that the misgovernment of an Oriental state should threaten a disturbance of the peace. The best way to prevent any risk of dissension was for both Governments to co-operate in Egypt with a view to the establishment in that country of a system of administration, which, although possibly defective, would be sufficient to check the worst of the existing abuses, and thus, by obviating the necessity for further interference, prevent the Egyptian Question from becoming European rather than local.

In the execution of this policy, occasional disagreements occurred. The French Government dwelt strongly on the interests of the foreign creditors. The British Government leant to the cause of the Egyptian peasantry. But in spite of some differences of opinion, the principle of common action was maintained. Moreover, the harmony which existed between London and Paris was reproduced in Cairo. In spite of occasional jars, the local representatives of the two Governments, as also their countrymen who were employed in the Egyptian service, worked fairly well together.

Every one recognised that the anarchical condition of affairs then existing in Egypt was due to the misgovernment of one individual, the Khedive Ismail Pasha. Of that, there could not be any doubt. But, as has been already pointed out, there were two methods of checking the continuance of misgovernment. One was to place Ismail Pasha under such stringent control as to reduce him almost to a cipher. The other was to impose on him a modified form of control, to recognise the impossibility of governing the country without his co-operation so long as he remained Khedive of Egypt, and to endeavour to guide him in the path of reform rather than to exercise extreme compulsion in forcing him along it.

It was a most unfortunate circumstance that at this moment the principal Europeans concerned in the administration of Egypt were not agreed as to which of these two systems should be adopted. The official world was divided into two opposing camps, each honestly believing that its own system was the best. Lord Vivian supported the system which involved counting with Ismail Pasha's personal power. Sir Rivers Wilson supported the rival system, which involved the reduction of the Khedive to a political nullity.

Neither Lord Vivian nor Sir Rivers Wilson had had any previous experience in dealing with Eastern affairs. Sir Rivers Wilson had passed his life in the service of the English Treasury, where he had acquired a sound financial training, which, added to much natural quickness and ability, proved of great service to him in dealing with the technical portions of the Egyptian financial situation.[1] In some respects, however, this training was a disadvantage to him. The fiscal system in an Eastern country differs widely from that which exists in England; neither does the technically sound but somewhat narrow school of the English Treasury afford an ideal training for an Englishman who has to deal with Eastern affairs. It often engenders a somewhat inelastic frame of mind, and a tendency to ignore political considerations which no European financier in the East can afford to neglect.

Lord Vivian, on the other hand, had had no experience in dealing with financial affairs. This was a disadvantage to him at a time when the pecuniary embarrassments of the country, in which he was the British representative, had become the chief subject for diplomatic action. On the other hand, he had been dealing with foreign affairs all his life. He had had a sound diplomatic training. He possessed a calm judgment, great moral courage, and a clear insight into the political forces at work around him.

I was a spectator of these unfortunate dissensions, and was thus in a position to hear both sides of the question. My belief is that, in view of Ismail Pasha's personal character, neither the adoption of the system advocated by Lord Vivian, nor the adoption of that of which Sir Rivers Wilson was the leading representative, would have materially altered the course of Egyptian history. No confidence could be placed in Ismail Pasha's promises Whatever he might say, he was determined to remain the absolute ruler of Egypt. He might appear to yield for the moment, but he trusted to his resource and to his remarkable power of intrigue to nullify any concessions which might be extorted from him, and thus ultimately regain his previous position. This, however, is mere conjecture. It is possible that I may be doing an injustice to Ismail Pasha, though I do not think that I am. What is more certain is that the system advocated by Lord Vivian gave him a fair chance if he wished to act up to the engagements which he had taken. It presented some hope of success. Sir Rivers Wilson's policy, on the other hand, was foredoomed to failure. It was based on an incorrect appreciation of what was and what was not possible under the political circumstances then existing in Egypt.

---

[1] Sir Rivers Wilson was employed in Egypt for a couple of months in 1876, and had thus learnt something of the local financial situation, but the period was too short to enable him to acquire any real experience of Orientals or of Eastern forms of government.

In the meantime, the British Government were bewildered by the conflicting accounts which they received from Egypt. One point, however, was clear. The disagreements between Lord Vivian and Sir Rivers Wilson were doing a great deal of harm. Ismail Pasha would gladly play the congenial part of a *tertius gaudens.* He would not be slow to turn the position to his own advantage. On March 15, therefore, Lord Vivian was summoned to London. On March 20, Sir Frank Lascelles arrived to take over Lord Vivian's duties. He was instructed "to give his cordial support to Sir Rivers Wilson in his dealings with the Khedive."

Prince Tewfik, at the time of his assuming the presidency of the Egyptian Council in 1879, was twenty-seven years of age. He was desirous to do all in his power to help in the crisis which then existed in Egyptian affairs. On March 24, he had an interview with Sir Frank Lascelles. The mutinous officers, he said, had been paid. "Tout rentrera dans le calme." The Khedive was determined to act in harmony with his Ministers. "There were, no doubt, great difficulties to be overcome, but with the cordial co-operation of all parties, they might be surmounted."

Nevertheless, the experiment which was made at this time failed. The Khedive had, indeed, got rid of Nubar Pasha, but the principle that he was himself to be reduced to the condition of a political nullity had not undergone any serious modifications. The terms imposed upon him were so onerous and humiliating that, even had he been animated with better intentions than those with which, I fear, he must be credited, it would have been difficult to make the machine of government work smoothly. It was especially a mistake to insist on giving precision in detail to the relations which were to subsist between the Khedive and his Ministers. A man like Ismail Pasha was not to be bound by these ropes of diplomatic sand. Either he meant to act loyally with his European Ministers, or he had no such intention. Either they could acquire a personal influence over him, or they would be unable to do so. In the one case, the machine could have been worked without any very precise definition of the relations which were to exist between the Khedive and his Ministers. In the other case, those definitions were insufficient to prevent a collapse of the system. Under the existing circumstances, personal influence was of greater importance than any powers based on the text of a Khedivial letter or Decree.

Scarcely had the new Ministry been formed, when an incident occurred which gave a correct indication of what was to follow. The interest on the loan of 1864, which was secured on the Moukábala tax, fell due on April 1, 1879. It amounted to £240,000. On March 28, the amount of money in the hands of the Commissioners of the Debt fell short of this sum by £196,000. The Commission of Inquiry was at that time preparing a project for a settlement of the financial situation. It was known that the Commissioners contemplated the repeal of the law of the Moukábala. This proposal was unpopular amongst the wealthier classes in Egypt. The Ministers, acting in concert with the Commissioners of Inquiry, considered that the best plan would be to postpone the payment of the coupon due on April 1 to May 1. A draft Decree giving effect to this proposal was submitted to the Khedive by Sir Rivers Wilson. The Khedive at first refused to sign it. It was, he said, nothing less than a declaration of bankruptcy. He did not consider that the country was bankrupt. He believed that all the financial engagements of the Egyptian Government could be met. He could not sign such a Decree in the face of the political and financial engagements imposed on him by the British and French Governments. Ultimately, some changes were made in the wording of the preamble, and the Khedive was induced to sign.

Inasmuch as the Khedive had for a long time past been insisting on his inability to meet all his financial engagements, it was evident that some strong motive must have existed to make him reject a proposal, which was submitted to him by his European advisers, to postpone payment of the interest on a portion of the debt. The reason for this change of policy was abundantly clear. The Khedive, in spite of his recent promises, was actively engaged in intrigues having for their object the overthrow of the Ministry. He was preparing a financial plan of his own in opposition to the scheme then being evolved by the Commission of Inquiry. This plan he intended to submit to the Powers.

On April 1, Sir Frank Lascelles reported to Lord Salisbury as follows: "Considerable agitation exists here at the present moment. . . . It appears that the Sheikh-el-Bekri[1] holds meetings with the Notables and Ulemas, with the object of exciting religious animosity against the European Ministers, and that Riaz Pasha has been denounced in the Mosques as a friend of the Christians. There is danger that Riaz Pasha, who has been warned by the Prefect of the Police that his life is in peril, may be forced into resigning."

Three days later (April 4), Sir Frank Lascelles wrote: "It appears that there is no doubt about the meetings having been held, and that there is constant communication between the Khedive and the more influential persons who attended them. Their object, however, is to obtain support to the financial plan, which the Khedive is preparing in opposition to that of Sir Rivers Wilson, and also to get up petitions to His Highness to put into force the Turkish Constitution, which was promulgated here in 1877, but which has hitherto remained a dead letter. . . . I have been told that the arguments addressed to the wealthy portion of the population in order to obtain signatures to the petition were that, if Sir Rivers Wilson's plan were to come into force, the taxes on the Ouchouri lands would be largely increased, and that the benefits conferred by the Moukábala law would be lost, and that the Ulema have been led to believe that it is the intention of the European Ministers to hand over the country entirely to Europeans, and thus seriously jeopardise the Moslem faith, but there can be little doubt that the chief incentive to sign the petition was the knowledge that the signatures would be agreeable to the Khedive.

---

[1] The Sheikh-el-Bekri was the Nekib-el-Ashraf, or representative of all the descendants of the Prophet in Egypt. He was also the head of the religious Corporations.

"Riaz Pasha has informed me that some of the employés of the Ministry of the Interior had been called upon for their signatures, and had not dared to refuse."

On April 6, the European Ministers placed in the hands of the Khedive a formal protest against the line of conduct which he was pursuing, and which, as they rightly pointed out, was in opposition to his former pledges. The Khedive paid no attention to this protest. His plans were now matured. He was ready to strike a decisive blow with a view to regaining his personal power.

On April 9, the Khedive convoked the members of the diplomatic corps and delivered an address to them in the presence of a number of Egyptian Notables, who had been assembled for the occasion. He said that the discontent in the country had reached such a pitch that he felt bound to allay it by adopting radical measures. A financial project, which expressed the true wishes of the country, had been submitted to him signed by all classes of the population. In this project, copies of which would be at once communicated to the representatives of the Powers, "the nation protested against the declaration of bankruptcy, which was contemplated by Sir Rivers Wilson, and demanded the formation of a purely Egyptian Ministry, which would be responsible to the Chamber of Deputies."

Prince Tewfik, "yielding to the will of the nation," had tendered his resignation. He would be replaced by Chérif Pasha. The Khedive would continue to govern in accordance with the Rescript of August 28, which sanctioned the principle of ministerial responsibility. The Decree of November

18, 1876, which had been negotiated by Messrs. Goschen and Joubert, would be strictly observed.

Chérif Pasha then added a few words. "The nation" thought that the Ministers had behaved in a manner which was insulting to its representatives. A declaration of bankruptcy would be dishonourable. The country was determined to make any sacrifices to avoid it. The contemplated repeal of the law of the Moukábala had given rise to great dissatisfaction. "It would have been impossible for the Khedive to have put himself in opposition to the will of the nation, which had been so positively expressed."

The Consuls-General listened to these remarkable declarations "in complete silence." The Austrian Consul-General, however, asked a somewhat pertinent question. Would the persons who had signed the project be prepared to mortgage their own properties as a guarantee for the execution of the financial plan? To this the Khedive replied that there would be no necessity for the adoption of any such course. "It would be impossible to give a stronger guarantee than the determination of the whole country, from the head of the State to the humblest individual, to submit to any sacrifices rather than to the disgrace of national bankruptcy."

Three documents were communicated to the Consuls-General immediately after the meeting.

The first of these was an address from the Chamber of Notables. It stated that the new Ministers had frequently violated the rights of the Chamber. No explanation was, however, given as to the precise nature of these alleged violations. As regards the idea of a declaration of bankruptcy, and the proposed repeal of the law of the Moukábala, the Notables expressed themselves in the following terms: "Tous ces actes

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

sont nuisibles à nos intérêts et contraires à nos droits. Jamais nous n'en accepterons l'exécution." They begged the Khedive, therefore, to take the situation into his consideration, "afin d'éviter les sérieuses difficultés qui pourraient naître à l'avenir si nos droits et ceux de la nation continuaient à être ainsi méconnues ; de graves dangers pourraient même en résulter."

The second document submitted to the Consuls-General was an address presented to the Khedive by a number of delegates chosen from amongst the Ulema, the highest officials of the State, both civil and military, and other Notables. In this address it was stated that the petitioners had examined the financial scheme prepared by Sir Rivers Wilson. They considered that the proposals contained in that scheme were contrary to the interests of the country ; they were of opinion that the revenues of Egypt were sufficient to discharge all the debts due by the State ; they had, therefore, prepared a counter-project, which they asked should be submitted to the Chamber of Notables. They begged that the Khedive would give to the Chamber "les attributions et les pouvoirs dont jouissent les Chambres des Deputés Européennes en ce qui concerne les questions intérieures et financières." The Council of Ministers was to be independent of the Khedive, and was to be responsible to the Chamber.

The third document was a plan for the settlement of the financial situation.

These documents were sent by the Consuls-General to their respective Governments by the mail which was then about to leave for Europe. The same mail should have carried a number of copies of the report, which the Commissioners of Inquiry had just completed. These latter were, however, stopped in the Post-office by order of the

Khedive in the hope that "the plan submitted to the Khedive might be approved of before the report of the Commissioners was generally known."

Letters were written by the Khedive to Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières stating that "in obedience to the positive wishes of the nation he had entrusted Chérif Pasha with the formation of a new Cabinet, which was to be composed entirely of Egyptians."

When the European Ministers were appointed to the Egyptian Cabinet, the British and French Governments stipulated "that the Commission of Control over the Egyptian finances appointed under the Decree of November 1876, should be *ipso facto* revived in case either the English or French member of the Egyptian Cabinet should be dismissed without the consent of his Government." In order to fulfil the engagement thus taken by the Egyptian Government, Chérif Pasha wrote to M. Bellaigues de Bughas, who had been appointed Commissioner of the Debt in succession to M. de Blignières, and myself, requesting us to assume the offices of Controllers-General of the expenditure and of the receipts. We stated in our reply that we must decline to associate ourselves with a financial plan which in our eyes was impracticable, or with a change of system which was in contradiction to the engagements recently taken by the Khedive towards the British and French Governments. Chérif Pasha thereupon informed Sir Frank Lascelles that he considered our refusal to take office freed the Egyptian Government from any responsibility as regards the immediate re-establishment of the Control. The French and British Governments were, however, asked to name Controllers.

Sir Gerald Fitzgerald, Blum Pasha, the Secretary of the Financial Department. and Sir Auckland

Colvin, who was head of the Cadastral Survey, also resigned their appointments.

A Decree was issued naming Chérif Pasha President of the Council, and charging him with the formation of a Ministry. A letter was at the same time addressed to Chérif Pasha by the Khedive, setting forth the principles which were for the future to guide the Government of the country. This letter began in the following terms: "Comme Chef d'État et comme Égyptien, je considère un devoir sacré, pour moi, de suivre l'opinion de mon pays et de donner une satisfaction entière à ses légitimes aspirations." The Khedive then went on to say that the financial plan prepared by the Minister of Finance, which declared the country in a state of bankruptcy and which violated vested interests, had "achevé de soulever contre le Cabinet le sentiment national." Public opinion had found expression in the address which had been presented to him. Yielding to the wishes expressed in this address, he requested Chérif Pasha to form a Cabinet composed "d'éléments véritablement Égyptiens." As regards the demand for parliamentary institutions, the Khedive said that a Chamber would be formed, "dont les modes d'élection et les droits seront réglés de façon à répondre aux exigeances de la situation intérieure et aux aspirations nationales." The new Cabinet was to prepare electoral laws upon the model of those which existed in Europe, "tout en tenant compte des mœurs et des besoins de la population." The Khedive expressed his approval of the financial plan which had been submitted to him by the Notables. The Cabinet was to carry out that plan in its integrity. The letter concluded in the following terms: "Connaissant votre dévouement au pays, je ne doute pas que Votre Excellence, s'entourant d'hommes jouissant comme Elle de la confiance et de l'estime publique, ne mène à bonne fin l'œuvre civilisatrice à laquelle je veux attacher mon nom."

Immediately afterwards, the other Ministers, those who were to "enjoy the public confidence and esteem," were nominated. They were all men who were under the absolute control of the Khedive, and who did not in the smallest degree represent the national party, supposing there to have been one. Shahin Pasha was named Minister for War, and Omar Pasha Lutfi Inspector-General with a seat in the Cabinet. Both had gained unenviable reputations by the unscrupulous methods which in former capacities they had adopted for collecting the revenue.

History records several instances of free institutions which have foundered under the influence of one commanding mind. The Emperors Augustus and Napoleon were the great high-priests of a policy having for its object a transfer of power from the people to their ruler. All students of history are familiar with the procedures which they adopted. But, so far as my historical knowledge goes, the clumsy experiment made by Ismail Pasha was of a somewhat novel character. This was not a case in which existing free institutions had, by a combination of force and diplomacy, to be bent to suit the wishes of a despotic ruler. On the contrary, the Khedive was already an absolute ruler. Scarcely a trace of independent thought or action could be found in the whole body politic of Egypt. Ismail Pasha endeavoured to call free institutions temporarily into existence as an instrument through whose agency he might regain his personal power, which was threatened by foreign interference. It was a curious sight to see Ismail Pasha, who was the living embodiment of despotic government in its most extreme form, posing as an ultra-constitutional ruler who could not conscientiously place himself in opposition to the national will. It was a still more curious sight to see the same man, who had but recently protested that he could not pay his debts, suddenly turn round and reject with disdain the proposals, made to him by those who represented his creditors, that he should declare himself insolvent. But perhaps the highest point of interest in this strange comedy was reached when the unfortunate peasantry of Egypt, who were groaning under Ismail Pasha's rule and who only asked to be relieved of taxation without inquiring into the effect such a relief would exercise on other interests, were represented as being willing to incur any sacrifice rather than submit to the disgrace of national bankruptcy. It may be asserted with absolute confidence that the mass of the Egyptian people understood nothing of what was going on at the time. The Notables, however, understood something. In the first place, they understood that the Khedive, for reasons of his own into which it was no business of theirs to inquire, wished them to say that they ardently desired the establishment of certain institutions of the nature of which they only had a vague idea, but which were said to have produced excellent effects in other countries. Whether or not the same beneficial results would ensue from their adoption in Egypt might be doubtful, but in any case it was clear that the Khedive must be obeyed. In the second place, they understood in a general way that all the difficulties of the moment were due to the fact that large sums of money were owing to Europeans. They had seen the worst side of European interference. That it should be exercised in the true interests of the Egyptian people was not credible. When, therefore, it was represented to them that the last phase of European interference was that the privileges of the classes to which they belonged were threatened, it needed no great amount of persuasion to enlist their sympathies on the side of opposition to the new order of things. Religious antipathy would also drive them in the same direction.

It is, indeed, probable that, from the purely Egyptian point of view, Ismail Pasha's plan would have been more attractive if the proposal to establish an Egyptian Parliament had been dropped out of the programme, and if he had taken his stand on the general feeling of dislike to Europeans, and on religious fanaticism. Appeals to either of these sentiments would have been more comprehensible to his followers, and would have met with a more hearty response, than arguments based on the establishment of institutions which were foreign to the national traditions. Save to a very few, such arguments were probably incomprehensible.

But Ismail Pasha was debarred from using arms of this description, save to a very limited extent. In the first place, he was not a fanatic, and religious fanaticism was a matter of which he had had some experience. He knew its danger, and when it had appeared he had on several occasions adopted summary methods for stamping it out. He did not enjoy the reputation of being a devout Mohammedan, and, had not material interests and the fear of disobedience to a despotic ruler been brought into play, he would have exercised but little influence over those classes who honestly represented Mohammedan devotion. In the second place, it was a necessity of his position that he should not go far in appealing to sentiments of this description. He understood enough of European opinion to appreciate the fact that any such appeals would forfeit the sympathies and evoke the fears of Europe. This might be dangerous. From every point of view it would be safer, and in all probability more productive of result, if the revolution were carried out in the name of civilisation and progress, and under the banner of constitutionalism. His followers could not, indeed, be prevented from acting in some degree according to their own imperfect lights. "Large numbers of the fanatical population" were summoned to Cairo. Sir Frank Lascelles thought they "might become a source of real danger." Provided proceedings of this sort were kept within proper bounds, they might afford powerful aid to the cause. But it would be impolitic if the Khedive were too openly associated with the crude ideas and ill-judged proceedings of his ignorant followers. It would be wiser to pose as an enlightened ruler, following the popular will and, at the same time, standing as a guardian angel between Moslem fanaticism and modern civilisation.

Ismail Pasha was employing dangerous instruments. First, he encouraged mutiny in his own army. Then he played with the uncongenial idea of introducing free institutions into the country. This was perilous work for a despotic ruler. The soldiers had learnt their power, and even amongst the poor ignorant people, who, at their master's behest, asked for things of which the large majority were completely ignorant, there might be some few who would take him at his word. The seed then sown did, in fact, bring forth some fruit at a later period of Egyptian history.

For the moment, however, the success of the manœuvre appeared complete. Europe must surely see that the Egyptian people were singularly unanimous, and that an enlightened ruler was about to confer on them the blessings of a constitutional form of government, which they ardently desired. The Khedive had defied two powerful Governments; he had got rid of his European advisers; and he had appointed in their places a number of men who would implicitly obey his orders, and who, albeit free institutions were to be introduced, would have no scruples in acting on the most approved principles of personal government. European Governments might perhaps lecture him, but international rivalry was so intense that no common action of a serious nature was to be feared. He had, indeed, drawn a heavy draft on the credulity of Europe. Even those who were not conversant with Eastern affairs might not unnaturally think that when an Oriental Gracchus complained of sedition his arguments were not to be accepted without some reserve. Nevertheless, the scheme would probably have been successful if the financial plan, which the Khedive had pledged himself to carry out, had been based on any solid foundation. If he had been able to pay his debts, no excuse would have existed for further interference from abroad. Unfortunately for the Khedive, his financial plan was impossible of execution. The entire scheme crumbled to the ground and, in falling, overwhelmed its author.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

April 1879

Declaration of bankruptcy—Principles of the settlement—The Khedive's Civil List—The Ouchouri land-tax—The Rouznameh loan—The law of the Moukábala—Reductions of taxation—Composition with the creditors—Comments on the report—The Commissioners resign—The Khedive's counter-proposals—Revival of the practices of the old régime—The Commissioners of the Debt institute legal proceedings against the Egyptian Government—My departure from Egypt.

During all this period, the Commission of Inquiry had been sitting with a view to the preparation of a plan for the settlement of the financial situation. It is unnecessary to enter into all the complicated details of the questions which came under the consideration of the Commissioners. But it will be desirable to state the main conclusions at which they arrived.

The Commissioners began their report[1] by stating that the Egyptian Government were bankrupt, and, moreover, that the state of bankruptcy had really commenced on April 6, 1876, on which day the Khedive suspended payment of the Treasury bills falling due. It was true that since that date not only had the interest on the debt been paid, but a sum of £2,645,000 had been devoted to sinking fund. As purchases of stock were made in the market at prices varying from 31¼ to 43, nominal capital to the extent of £4,858,000 had been extinguished. On the other hand, the actual deficits of the two years, 1877 and 1878, amounted to no less than £4,822,000. The floating debt had, therefore, been increased by an amount of £2,177,000 in excess of the money applied to sinking fund. "Payer les coupons," the Commissioners said, "dans ces conditions, c'est distribuer des dividendes fictifs, et l'on sait à quels résultats arrivent les sociétés qui persévèrent dans cette voie. Leur situation paraît brillante jusqu'au jour ou la ruine est irrémédiable." In truth, the taxpayers and the creditors had alike suffered from the delay which had occurred in recognising the true facts of the case. The only sound starting-point for the establishment of a better order of things was to be found in facing the facts boldly. "Le pays," M. de Blignières said, "est saigné à blanc." Measures such as those which had been heretofore adopted to produce a fictitious appearance of solvency, must be discarded. The annual expenditure must be brought down to the limits of the annual revenue. It was a great point gained that these preliminary truths should be officially recognised by a trustworthy body of Europeans, amongst whom were included the representatives of the bondholders.

---

[1] The first draft of this report was prepared by myself. It, of course, underwent a good many modifications before a final text was approved. The French was revised by M. de Blignières.

Having ascertained beyond doubt that the Egyptian Government could not meet all their financial engagements, the Commissioners proceeded to lay down the principles which should form the basis of a composition with the creditors of the State. It was impossible to do justice to all the interests involved. "Le système de gouverner le pays," we said, "jusqu'à présent en vigueur a rendu impossible de rendre justice à tous les intérêts engagés. Le seul résultat auquel le nouveau régime pourra aspirer, c'est de partager l'injustice aussi équitablement que possible."

The Commissioners then laid down three principles.

The first of these was that no sacrifice should be demanded from the creditors until every reasonable sacrifice had been made by the debtors. "On n'a pas," the Commissioners said, "à insister sur l'équité de ce principe." It was, in fact, perfectly just and logical. But in its application, a subsidiary question naturally arose. Who in this case were the debtors? Morally speaking, the real debtor was the Khedive. He had for years past disposed absolutely of the revenues of Egypt. He had contracted the debts without reference to the wishes or true interests of the people over whom, by the accident of birth, he had been called to rule. Unfortunately, he had dragged his people along with him. No moral responsibility whatsoever attached to them, for they had never been consulted as regards the measures which had been taken by the Khedive. But, however hard the conclusion might appear, it was inevitable that they should suffer from the faults of their ruler. Considerations of equity and sound financial policy, however, alike dictated moderation in the application of the principle enunciated above. The people of Egypt would have to make certain sacrifices, but, the Commissioners added, "il serait assurément contraire aux intérêts généraux de leur imposer des sacrifices au-dessus de leurs forces. On verra même dans la suite de ce rapport que nous proposons de leur accorder immédiatement des soulagements sensibles."

The second principle laid down by the Commissioners was that, in deciding on the degrees of sacrifice which should be imposed on the different classes of creditors, it was desirable to conform as much as possible to the procedure indicated by the Egyptian code as that which should be followed in dealing with the estate of a private individual who was bankrupt.

In the third place, it was necessary that any general arrangement which might be adopted should be made obligatory on all the persons who were interested. The number of creditors was so large, and their claims were of such various natures, that it was hopeless to expect unanimity in the acceptance of any voluntary arrangement. A small minority might, therefore, prevent the adoption of any general scheme. The only way to avoid this inconvenience was to pass a law, which would have to be accepted by all the Powers, and which would thus become binding on the Mixed Tribunals and on all the parties concerned.

Having laid down these principles, the Commissioners proceeded to deal with the personal position of the Khedive.

His Highness had given up most of the estates of the Khedivial family,[1] upon the security of which a loan had been raised. The proceeds of this loan were about to be applied to the liquidation of the floating debt. It was now necessary to fix the amount of the Khedive's Civil List. "Assurément," the Commissioners said, "au moment de demander de nouveaux sacrifices de la part de ses créanciers, Son Altesse ne voudra pas que ses dotations soient fixées à un chiffre trop élevé." The Civil List was, therefore, fixed at £E.300,000 a year.

The question of the sacrifices to be imposed on the Egyptian taxpayers presented greater difficulties. Three important points had to be decided. The first was whether the tax on the Ouchouri lands should be increased. The second was whether the Rouznameh loan was to be included amongst the debts of the State. The third was how to deal with the law of the Moukábala. The financial future of the country depended more especially on whether any satisfactory solution could be found to the third of these questions.

---

[1] The residue which remained over eventually acquired great value. Quite recently, a plot of land in the town of Cairo belonging to some of the Khedivial princes sold for no less than £600,000.

Without going into any lengthy description of the system of land-tenure existing in Egypt, it will be sufficient for the purposes of the present argument to state that the land was at that time divided into two main categories, Ouchouri and Kharadji.[1] Ouchouri lands, as their name implies, are supposed to pay a tithe to the State. They were originally, for the most part, fiefs granted by the ruler of the country to his followers. The assessment on the Kharadji was much higher than in the case of the Ouchouri lands, and moreover it was, in theory at all events, variable at the will of the Government. At the time the Commission of Inquiry sat, 1,323,000 acres of land were held under Ouchouri, and 3,487,000 acres under Kharadji tenure. In 1877, the total amount of land-tax paid on Kharadji lands amounted to £E.3,143,000, as against £E.333,000 paid by the Ouchouri landowners. In Lower Egypt, the Kharadji lands were assessed at from P.T. 120 to 170 an acre. In exceptional cases, the tax was as much as, and occasionally even in excess of P.T. 200. The average rate paid on Kharadji lands throughout Egypt was P.T. 116·2. The maximum rate payable on Ouchouri lands was P.T. 83·5 an acre. In many cases, they paid a mere quit-rent. The average rate throughout

---

[1] "Ouchouri" is derived from the Arabic word "Ushr," meaning the tenth part. "Kharàj" was the word originally applied to the tribute paid, for the most part, by the inhabitants of non-Moslem countries to their Moslem conquerors.

Egypt was P.T. 30·30 an acre. The quality of the Ouchouri lands varied greatly. They included some of the best and also some of the worst land in the country. The best qualities of land were largely held by the Khedivial family. All the Ouchouri lands were in the possession of persons of wealth and importance.

Before the first report of the Commission of Inquiry was sent in, the Khedive had expressed his willingness to raise the tax on the Ouchouri lands. The Commissioners had now to consider in what manner effect should be given to this proposal. They recommended that a cadastral survey should be made with the least possible delay, and that, on reassessing the land-tax, the distinction between Ouchouri and Kharadji lands should disappear. As, however, a cadastral survey would take a long time, they proposed that the Ouchouri land-tax should be at once increased by £E.150,000 a year, to be distributed ratably.

Turning to the question of the Rouznameh loan, the Commissioners pointed out that the Government had considered it as a tax, and that there was manifestly never any intention of paying interest, and still less of repaying the capital to the subscribers. Of the truth of these statements there could be no manner of doubt. In 1877, the Chamber of Notables agreed to a proposal that the payment of interest on the loan should be suspended. At the same time, "il fut ordonné qu'aussitôt que l'intégralité de la Moukábala aurait été perçue, on devrait procéder à la perception des £3,000,000, solde des £5,000,000 originairement fixées comme le montant total de l'emprunt Rouznameh." This decision threw a strong light on the complete subserviency of the Chamber of Notables, as also on the manner in which the Egyptian Government regarded their engagements both towards the

Rouznameh bondholders and towards those who had paid the Moukábala.

There could, of course, be no question of collecting any further sums on account of the Rouznameh loan. The only point to be decided was what was to be done as regards the money already collected. After full consideration, the Commissioners embodied their recommendations in the following words: "Nous croyons devoir proposer, conformément aux intentions primitives du Gouvernement Égyptien, de considérer comme un impôt la somme perçue à valoir sur l'emprunt Rouznameh et de la rayer du montant des dettes de l'État."

This proposal of the Commissioners was based on two grounds.

In the first place, it was thought that the non-recognition by the State of the Rouznameh loan was a fair sacrifice to demand of the debtors, more especially as, in connection with other matters, the Commissioners proposed measures which would afford a sensible relief to the taxpayers of Egypt.

In the second place, if the loan had been recognised as a State debt, great practical difficulties would have arisen in giving effect to the decision. It was clear that no one could be recognised as a State creditor unless he could afford proof of having lent money to the Government. It would have been necessary to insist on this point. Otherwise, fictitious claims would have cropped up on all sides. In the majority of cases, no proofs would have been forthcoming. No bonds or scrip were ever delivered to the subscribers to the loan. Even simple receipts for the money paid into the Treasury had only been given to a few favoured individuals. Under these circumstances, it would have been practically impossible to do justice to all the subscribers, more especially to those in the humblest classes of society who were most deserving of sympathy.

Considering the financial situation which then existed, the decision of the Commissioners on this subject was perfectly justifiable.

The most difficult question of all, however, was how to deal with the Moukábala. It is unnecessary to dwell any further on the ruinous nature of this transaction in so far as the State was concerned. The only procedure which, from a fiscal point of view, could in any way have justified it, would have been to have applied the whole of the money paid in virtue of the law of the Moukábala either to the extinction of debt, or to the execution of public works which would have yielded a direct revenue to the State. Unfortunately, nothing of this sort was done. The financial arrangements of November 1876 did, indeed, contemplate the application of a portion of the Moukábala funds to the extinction of debt, but before that period the money had been applied to current expenditure, and even after November 1876 the greater portion of the Moukábala money was devoted to the payment of interest on the debt.

It was certain that the Egyptian Government never had any intention of respecting the engagements which they had taken towards those who had paid the Moukábala. It was discovered in the course of the inquiries made by the Commissioners that the draft of a law had been prepared, under instructions received from the Egyptian Government, in virtue of which an "impôt sur la propriété" was to be imposed on the expiration of the law of the Moukábala. It was estimated that this new tax would yield £900,000 a year. The intentions, as also the bad faith of the Government were, therefore, sufficiently clear.

It was equally certain that the optional character of the Moukábala payments was delusive. "On ne peut pas douter," the Commissioners said, "que le caractère facultatif de cette taxe n'existait pas en réalité. Les contribuables l'ont toujours considérée comme aussi obligatoire que toutes les autres taxes. Le fait qu'à peine la nouvelle administration établie, ils refusent de tous les côtés de continuer le paiement de la Moukábala, en se référant à son caractère facultatif, prouve l'exactitude de cette assertion."

It was clear that, if the reformed administration continued to collect the Moukábala, they would have to do so in a very different spirit from that which had heretofore animated the Egyptian Government. The engagements taken towards the landowners would have to be respected. When once the Moukábala payments had ceased, the land-tax would have to be reduced to one-half of its original amount. No violation of the law or evasion of its spirit could be permitted. But, the Commissioners asked, "la nouvelle administration peut-elle remplir les engagements pris par ses prédécesseurs ?"

There could be but one answer to this question. "Nous n'avons pas," the Commissioners said, "la moindre hésitation à affirmer que, quel que puisse être le désir du Gouvernement actuel de remplir les engagement pris par ses prédécesseurs, les nécessités impérieuses de la situation ne lui permettront pas de le faire."

Obviously, the only honest course was to state the truth boldly. The Commissioners held that the new Ministry should not render itself responsible for the continuance of a system which was "radicalement vicieux et d'une application impossible." They therefore recommended that no further collections should be made on account of the Moukábala.

It remained to be determined what should be done as regards those persons who had already paid the Moukábala in whole or in part. It appeared from the accounts furnished by the Egyptian Government that about £16,000,000 had already been paid on account of Moukábala, but when the figures came to be examined, it was found that the Government had not in reality received nearly so large a sum as this.

In the first place, considerable sums had been paid in "ragaas"; that is to say, certificates acknowledging a debt due by the Government to the taxpayer. "On ne peut guère douter," the Commissioners said, "que l'acceptation de ces 'ragaas' par le Trésor n'ait donné lieu à de nombreux abus; car, par suite de ce système quelques propriétaires puissants ont pu arriver au dégrèvement d'une moitié de leur impôt foncier sans rien payer en espèces." The procedure, in fact, was after this fashion. Some favoured person obtained from the Finance Ministry an acknowledgment of a fictitious debt due to him by the Government. This document was paid into the Treasury in discharge of the sum due by the same person on account of Moukábala. His land-tax was then reduced by one-half, without his having expended a farthing. It was impossible to state with precision the extent to which this practice had been carried on, but there could be no doubt that it had occasioned a heavy loss to the Treasury.

Another point had to be considered. Many of the payments made, even in money, on account of the Moukábala were fictitious. They had only been possible because sums due on account of other taxes were allowed to remain unpaid. A single example will suffice to show how the system worked in practice. The amount of land-tax due by four villages, chosen at hazard in the province of

Galioubieh, was £1640. The amount due on account of Moukábala in these villages was £1472. The total amount due was, therefore, £3112. In the year 1878, £2251 was collected in these four villages. Of this amount, £1472, that is to say the total sum due, was credited to Moukábala, leaving only £779 available for ordinary land-lax. The latter, therefore, remained unpaid to the extent of £861.

When, however, all the deductions based on the above facts were made, there still remained a large sum due by the Government to those persons who had really paid the Moukábala. The most equitable course to have pursued would have been to have raised a loan and to have repaid this money; but in the then exhausted state of Egyptian credit, the adoption of this course was impossible.

It may be convenient if, passing over the recommendations made by the Commissioners of Inquiry, the course eventually pursued as regards those persons who had really paid the Moukábala is here stated. It was found that, when all legitimate deductions had been made, the sum really due was £9,500,000. Under the law of Liquidation of July 17, 1880, an annual sum of £150,000 was allotted for fifty years to those who had paid the Moukábala. They are thus now receiving interest at the rate of about 1½ per cent on the capital sums which they paid.

In 1876, the Egyptian Government estimated the annual receipts from the Moukábala at £1,650,000. The amount paid in 1877 was £1,337,000, and in 1878, £1,000,000. For the future, the country was, of course, relieved of these payments. On the other hand, the land-tax was raised by £1,130,000.

The results of this change affected the Ouchouri and Kharadji proprietors in different proportions.

Out of 3,487,000 acres of Kharadji land, only 240,000 acres had paid the Moukábala in full. For the most part, therefore, the Kharadji landowners were slightly relieved of taxation.

The case of the Ouchouri landowners was different. There were 1,323,000 acres of Ouchouri land in Egypt. On about 480,000 acres, the Moukábala had been paid in full, but most of the payments had been made in "ragaas," and were, therefore, fictitious. The changes in the law fell most severely on this class. Not only did they have to pay the amount of land-tax, as it stood previous to the enactment of the law of the Moukábala, but they also had to bear their share of the increase of £150,000 which was placed on the Ouchouri lands. Even, then, however, they paid much less than the Kharadji landowners.

The Moukábala had been paid in part on 725,000 acres of Ouchouri land. On these lands, the immediate increase of taxation, if any, was slight.

Finally, no Moukábala payments had been made on 118,000 acres of Ouchouri land. The owners of these lands were not, of course, affected by the repeal of the law of the Moukábala, but they had to pay their share of the £150,000 increase on all Ouchouri lands.

In order to compensate for the withdrawal of the privileges accorded by the law of the Moukábala, the Commissioners proposed several measures, from the adoption of which great benefits, it was rightly thought, would accrue to the population. The arrears due for land-tax prior to January 1, 1876, and amounting to about £30,000, were to be remitted. All agriculturists were to be relieved from payment of the professional tax. It was estimated that the adoption of this measure would involve a relief of taxation amounting to £80,000 a year. The poll-tax, yielding £205,000 a year, was to be abolished; so also were the octroi dues in the villages, yielding £21,000 a year; the "droits de voirie" in the villages, yielding £8000 a year; the market dues in the villages, yielding £10,000 a year; the weighing dues in the villages, yielding £17,000 a year; the dues on stamping mats and tissues, yielding £23,000 a year; the dues on the sale of cattle, yielding £1500 a year; and some other minor taxes. In all, a remission of taxation to the extent of about £400,000 a year was proposed.[1]

On the whole, although it is, in my opinion, to be regretted that no higher rate of interest was allowed to those to whom money was really due on account of Moukábala, it may be said that the proposals of the Commissioners were as just to the people of Egypt as the very difficult circumstances of the case admitted.

It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the proposals made by the Commissioners in respect to the creditors of the Egyptian Government. Those proposals underwent considerable modifications before a final settlement was eventually made in July 1880. It will be sufficient to say that the general principle on which the Commissioners based their recommendations was that the special security held by each class of creditor was to be respected as far as possible. No change was proposed in the position of the Preference bondholders. The Commissioners were of opinion that for the moment it was impossible to state definitely what should be the rate of interest on the Unified Stock. They proposed, therefore, that the rate should be temporarily reduced from 6 to 5 per cent. The rate of interest on the Daira Sanieh and Daira Khassa loans was also reduced to 5 per cent. As regards the creditors who held no special securities, a sum of about £6,301,000 was available to liquidate claims amounting to about £8,210,000. After discharging certain debts which had to be paid in full, the Commissioners recommended that the balance left over should be distributed ratably amongst the creditors. It was estimated that sufficient money would be available to pay the creditors 52 per cent of their claims.

---

[1] The relief was in reality much greater, for it cannot be doubted that far larger sums were collected than were paid into the Government Treasury.

Finally, the Commissioners prepared a Budget for the year 1879. The revenue was estimated at £9,067,000, and the expenditure at £8,803,000, thus leaving a surplus of £264,000. A sum of £3,130,000 was included in the estimates for administrative expenditure.

Such, therefore, were the general conclusions at which the Commissioners arrived. Fifteen months were to elapse before their recommendations, in a modified shape, took the form of law. Subsequently, important political events ensued. The work of fiscal reform had to be recommenced under different auspices from those which existed in 1879. Many years were to pass before the crisis in Egyptian financial affairs could be said to have terminated. Some errors were, without doubt, made by the Commissioners. Nevertheless, the work performed by the Commission of Inquiry has stood the test of time as well as could be expected, looking to the difficult circumstances of the situation with which they had to deal. It afforded a sound starting-point for further reforms. For the first time, an earnest effort had been made to grapple with the difficulties of the Egyptian financial situation. The inquiries of the Commissioners threw a flood of light on the extent of

Egyptian liabilities, the resources available to meet those liabilities, and the system under which the Government had heretofore been conducted. *Ad consilium de republicâ dandum, caput est, nosse rempublicam.* This elementary truth had been too much forgotten in dealing with Egyptian affairs. Now that the true facts of the situation were more accurately known, although mistakes might be made in subsidiary matters, it was no longer possible to draw erroneous conclusions as to the main questions at issue. The Egyptian Treasury was insolvent. The system of government had been as bad as possible. Both the people of Egypt and the creditors of the Egyptian Government were alike interested in the adoption of an improved system. It was futile to attempt to impose fresh burthens on the country. On the contrary, certain taxes should be abolished.

Even if the Commissioners had done nothing more than bring home the main facts of the situation to all concerned, they would have deserved well both of the Egyptian people and of all who were interested in the prosperity of Egypt.

The report of the Commission of Inquiry was signed on April 8. On the previous day, the Khedive dismissed his European Ministers, and charged Chérif Pasha with the formation of a new Ministry. The situation was thus completely changed. All hopes of introducing a reformed system of administration had for the time to be abandoned; and, without reforms, the scheme proposed by the Commission of Inquiry was incapable of execution. The Commissioners, therefore, tendered their resignations to the Khedive. They were, of course, accepted.

The counter project which[1] was prepared by the Khedive in concert with the Chamber of Notables was published on April 23. Little need be said of this plan. It was open to the most serious objections.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 102.

In the first place, it was impossible of execution. The revenue for 1879 was estimated at £9,837,000. This was nearly £800,000 in excess of the estimate made by the Commissioners of Inquiry, which was £9,067,000. Even this latter estimate erred on the side of optimism, and it was certain that the collection of such a sum as that named in the scheme of the Chamber of Notables was impossible without resorting to the oppressive methods of the past, and without again sacrificing the future to the present.

In the second place, although both the Khedive and his advisers had rejected the idea of national bankruptcy as dishonourable, the settlement which they proposed did, as a matter of fact, constitute an act of bankruptcy. The interest on the Unified Debt was to be reduced from 6 to 5 per cent, although hopes were held out that payment of interest at a higher rate would be resumed at some later period. In fact, as the Commissioners of Inquiry pointed out in a letter addressed to the Khedive, the scheme "protestait contre toute déclaration de faillite, mais en consacrait la réalité."

These objections would alone have been fatal to the scheme. Moreover, there was one very significant omission in the project. There could be no hope for reforms in Egypt unless a fixed sum were assigned for the private expenditure of the Khedive and his family. The scheme of the Chamber of Notables made no mention of any Civil List. In fact, the basis of the plan was that the Khedive should regain his personal power, and that the upper classes should preserve their privileges intact.

The effect of the change of policy inaugurated by the Khedive made itself immediately felt. On April 19, Sir Frank Lascelles reported that "Shahin Pasha, the Minister of War, had gone to Behera, probably for the purpose of collecting money; his former position as Inspector-General in Lower Egypt having secured for him an unenviable notoriety as one of the harshest and most successful tax-gatherers in the country."

A few days later, the British Vice-Consul at Zagazig wrote: "You ask how is the new régime working? Worse than before. Three-fourths of the taxes and one-half of the Moukábala are now exacted by means of the usual oppressions. The fellah, having no crop of cotton or grain to realise, is obliged to have recourse to usurers for money, which he gets at some 4 to 5 per cent per month. He has no alternative if he would avoid the 'courbash.' The 'Zawats' (aristocracy), meanwhile, only pay the 'Mal' (land-tax proper) at their pleasure, and, therefore, see everything *couleur de rose*. . . . Omar Pasha Lutfi, Inspector-General of Lower Egypt, has been here of late, and has given stringent orders for the collection of money by all possible means."

In a word, all the abuses of the old régime returned immediately the new Ministry came into power.

In the meanwhile, the Commissioners of the Debt were considering what action they should take. Under the changed circumstances of the situation, there was but one course left for them to pursue. They commenced a lawsuit against the Government in the Mixed Tribunals.

For some while previous to these events, I had been wishing to leave Egypt. I had, however, become interested in the work. So long as there appeared any hope of placing Egyptian financial affairs on a sound footing, I hesitated whether to go or to remain. All hopes of this sort seemed, however, to be dashed to the ground. Under the circumstances, I did not care to remain any longer in the country. I therefore resigned my appointment and left Egypt on May 24, 1879. From that date until I returned as Controller-General after the abdication of Ismail Pasha, I cannot speak from personal experience of what occurred in Egypt. Sir Auckland Colvin was appointed to be Commissioner of the Debt in my place.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE FALL OF ISMAIL PASHA

April–June 1879

Embarrassment of the European Powers—Turkey—England—France—Italy—Russia—Germany and Austria—The French and British Governments demand the reinstatement of the European Ministers—The Khedive declines to reinstate them—Question of re-establishing the Control—The German Government protest against the proceedings of the Khedive—The British and French Governments advise abdication—The Khedive appeals to the Sultan—The Sultan deposes the Khedive—Inauguration of Prince Tewfik—Ismail Pasha leaves Egypt—Remarks on his reign.

The action taken by the Khedive in dismissing his European Ministers embarrassed the various Powers who were interested in the affairs of Egypt. Moreover, all the most important Governments in Europe claimed a right to make their voices heard in any general settlement of Egyptian questions. The local difficulties of the situation were great. They were rendered greater by the fact that no serious step could be taken without producing a clash of conflicting international interests.

The Sultan was concerned lest his suzerain rights should be endangered. Turkish policy was, as usual, vacillating and inconsistent. Should not the Khedive be deposed? Nay, did not an opportunity now present itself to realise the pernicious dream which had haunted the minds of Turkish statesmen since the days when Mehemet Ali won by the power of the sword a quasi-independent position for himself and his dynasty? His descendant had shamefully abused his power. The people of Egypt were groaning under his yoke. Europe was dissatisfied with him. Could not all this be rectified by cancelling the Firmans and by the despatch of a Turkish Governor, with a few sturdy Ottoman battalions at his back, to rule the country? Truly, whispered interested diplomacy in the garb of a candid friend, but is not all this European interference somewhat dangerous? Might not the principle of deposition by reason of misgovernment be applied elsewhere? Was it not possible that public opinion, which was now so powerful, might apply the Horatian maxim and contend that many of those things, which inquisitive Commissioners of Inquiry had said of Egypt, might, with a change of name, be applied to other parts of the Ottoman dominions? This argument was not without its weight. From this point of view, perhaps it would be better to congratulate the Khedive on his defiant attitude, and to encourage him in his opposition to the appointment of European Ministers. But then came rival diplomatic mutterings. What would be the position of the Sultan if the two Western Powers, with a mere appearance of consultation with Constantinople, deposed the Khedive on their own initiative? If that were to happen, the world would see that Turkish suzerainty over Egypt was nothing more than a mere diplomatic expression. Would it not, therefore, be better to act at once so as to prevent others from taking action? Under all these circumstances, perhaps the best plan of all for a bewildered ruler, who was, perforce, obliged to speak the language of civilisation, but whose principles of civil government were very similar to those of his warlike ancestors, when they planted their horse-tails on the banks of the Bosphorus, was to fall back on the reflection that the times were out of joint, to await events, and to take no decisive action of any kind.

The difficulties of the British Government were also great. Their political interests in Egypt were of a nature which precluded total inaction. Indeed, there was manifestly a danger that a policy would be forced upon them which it had always been one of the objects of British statesmanship to avoid. "The Englishman," a man of literary genius had said some thirty years previously, "straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile and sit in the seats of the faithful."[1] Unless care were taken, the prophecy might be on the point of fulfilment, and the Anglo-Saxon race, in addition to responsibilities which were already world-wide, would have thrust upon it the burthen of governing Egypt.

British diplomacy, which may at times have been mistaken, but which was certainly honest, did its best to throw off the Egyptian burden. But circumstances were too strong to be arrested by diplomatic action. Egypt was to fall to Kinglake's Englishman. Moreover, it was to fall to him, although some were opposed to his going there, others were indifferent as to whether he went or not, none much wished him to go, and, not only did he not want to go there himself, but he struggled strenuously and honestly not to be obliged to go. The Moslem eventually accepted the accomplished fact, and muttered "Kismet"; but the European, blinded by international jealousy, not unfrequently attributed the whole affair to a deep-laid plot, and found in British policy as regards Egypt another convincing proof of the perfidy of Albion.

French diplomacy, on the other hand, was mainly interested in preventing the Englishman from planting his foot firmly on the banks of the Nile, and was, moreover, hampered by the financial necessities of "Great Paris Syndicates," and the like. A Turkish occupation was undesirable, the remedy being, in French opinion, worse than the disease, whilst the French Government of the day had the wisdom to see that a joint Anglo-French occupation would probably become a fertile source of disagreement between France and England. Had not Prince Bismarck been credited with the blunt epigrammatic saying that Egypt would be to France and England even as Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia and Austria?

---

[1] Kinglake's *Eothen*, p. 286.

Italy hovered around, clamorous to satisfy the restless ambition, which might perhaps have better been employed in improving the lot of the Tuscan or Neapolitan peasant, by obtaining some share of government on the cosmopolitan soil of Egypt.

Russia had no local interests to serve, and stood aloof. Possibly, however, as events developed, something might occur which could be turned to the advantage of Muscovite interests. It was to be observed, moreover, that the shipwreck of a Mohammedan Government afforded an additional proof that Orientals could not manage their own affairs. It behoved, therefore, any one who claimed to be heir-apparent to any part of the Ottoman dominions to be on the watch. In the meanwhile, perhaps a little diplomatic capital might be made out of the affair by posing as the protector of Turkey against foreign encroachments. "Nous avons," said a well-known Russian diplomatist, "tellement écorché ces pauvres Turcs au nord, c'est bien le moins que nous pourrons faire de les protéger un peu au sud."

Germany, which connoted Austria, had so far interfered but little in Egyptian affairs. Nevertheless, the co-operation of France and England in the execution of a common policy was perhaps regarded with no very friendly eye at Berlin. There were, moreover, certain German creditors of the Egyptian Government who had obtained judgments in the Mixed Courts. Were they not to be paid? Prince Bismarck would shortly ask that question, and when the master of many legions asked a question, it was understood that he expected some satisfactory reply.

The responsibility of taking the initiative devolved on the British and French Governments. It was evidently desirable, if possible, to avoid the extreme step of deposing Ismail Pasha. Supposing he refused to abdicate, it might become necessary to use force. In that case, both Governments might be obliged to adopt the policy which each honestly wished to avoid. Moreover, the summary dismissal of the European Ministers, though an unwise act, and one which constituted a grave discourtesy to both the British and French Governments, was not a violation of any positive engagement taken by the Khedive. On every ground, therefore, it was desirable to see what could be done by remonstrance before resorting to extreme measures. After the matter had been discussed in London and Paris, the two Governments agreed on a common line of action. In a despatch addressed to Sir Frank Lascelles on April 25, Lord Salisbury expressed himself in the following terms:—

"The Khedive is well aware that the considerations which compel Her Majesty's Government to take an interest in the destinies of Egypt have led them to pursue no other policy than that of developing the resources and securing the good government of the country. They have hitherto considered the independence of the Khedive and the maintenance of his dynasty as important conditions for the attainment of these ends; and the same sentiments have, they are well assured, animated the Government of France. . . . We would rather assume that the decision thus hastily taken by His Highness, both with respect to the future conduct of the reform and the attitude he proposes to maintain towards the two Governments, is not final. We prefer to look to his future action for a favourable interpretation of the conduct he has lately pursued. But if he continues to ignore the obligations imposed upon him by his past acts and assurances, and persists in declining the assistance of European Ministers whom the two Powers may place at his disposal, we must conclude that the disregard of engagements which has marked his recent action was the result of a settled plan, and that he deliberately renounces all pretension to their friendship. In such a case, it will only remain for the two Cabinets to reserve to themselves an entire liberty of appreciation and action in defending their interests in Egypt, and in seeking the arrangements best calculated to secure the good government and prosperity of the country."

When the Khedive dismissed his European Ministers, he was well aware of the serious nature of the step which he had taken. His first intention was to adopt a defiant attitude. An oath was administered to the superior officers of the army pledging them "to bear true allegiance to the Khedive, and to resist all the enemies of the country, of himself, and of his family." The strength of the army was at the same time increased. A few days, however, sufficed to show that the Khedive could not count on the loyalty of his own troops. Writing on April 26, Sir Frank Lascelles, after dwelling on the misery and discontent caused by the harsh measures of the new Ministry, added: "The discontent caused by such a state of things exists, I am informed, to a large extent in the army, and has given rise to a feeling of hostility against the Khedive, not only among the private soldiers, who are recruited from among the suffering classes of the population, but also among the officers, who, although they may be strongly opposed to European interference, regard the Khedive as being responsible for the disasters that have fallen upon the country."

When the British and French Consuls-General communicated to the Khedive the views expressed in Lord Salisbury's despatch of April 25, he deprecated any idea that he should have been guilty of intentional discourtesy towards the British and French Governments, but he declined to reinstate the European Ministers. It was, indeed, obvious to every one in Egypt that their reinstatement was undesirable, even if it had been possible.

Some discussion then took place as to the form in which Europeans should be associated with the government of Egypt. There could be but little hope that the revival of the Control would lead to any satisfactory results. With whatever nominal authority the Controllers might have been invested, they would have had no real power. They would not have been supported by any external force, or by the willing assistance of the Khedive, or by the sympathy of the people. They would have been associated with Ministers belonging to the retrograde Turkish party, with whose ideas they would have been unable to sympathise. Under such circumstances, their control would have been illusory, whilst, had they been nominated, the Governments of England and France would, at least in appearance, have assumed some responsibility for the financial catastrophe which was evidently impending.

The idea of reviving the Control was, therefore, wisely set aside.

In truth, every day it was becoming more apparent that no satisfactory solution of Egyptian difficulties was possible so long as Ismail Pasha remained at the head of affairs. The action of the German Government hastened the decision which would probably in any case have been taken, though perhaps somewhat later. The German Consul-General in Cairo was instructed to declare to the Khedive "that the Imperial Government looks upon the Decree of April 22, by which the Egyptian Government at their own will regulate the matters relating to the debt, thereby abolishing existing and recognised rights, as an open and direct violation of the international engagements contracted at the institution of the judicial reform; that it must declare the Decree to be devoid of any legally binding effect in regard to the competency of the Mixed Courts of Justice and the rights of the subjects of the Empire, and must hold the Viceroy responsible for all the consequences of his unlawful proceedings." The other Great Powers of Europe joined in this protest, although the form of communication to the Khedive underwent some modifications.

The end was evidently approaching. On June 19, Sir Frank Lascelles, acting under Lord Salisbury's instructions, made the following communication to the Khedive:—

"The French and English Governments are agreed to advise your Highness officially[1] to abdicate and to leave Egypt. Should Your Highness follow this advice, our Governments will act in concert in order that a suitable Civil List should be assigned to you, and that the order of succession, in virtue of which Prince Tewfik will succeed Your Highness, should not be disturbed. We must not conceal from Your Highness that if you refuse to abdicate, and if you compel the Cabinets of London and Paris to address themselves directly to the Sultan, you will not be able to count either upon obtaining the Civil List or upon the maintenance of the succession in favour of Prince Tewfik." It was necessary to give a warning as to the possibility of the succession passing away from Prince Tewfik. According to Mohammedan law, Prince Abdul Halim was the rightful heir, but the Firman of June 8, 1873, laid down that the succession was to proceed by right of primogeniture. The Khedive had obtained this concession from the Sultan by the expenditure of large sums of money. There was now some danger that his efforts to keep the succession for his children would have been made in vain. It was known that the candidature of Prince Halim found favour at Constantinople.

---

[1] A private communication to the same effect had been made some days previously.

Simultaneously with the transmission of orders to Sir Frank Lascelles that he should, in conjunction with his French colleague, advise the Khedive to abdicate, a despatch was written by Lord Salisbury stating the reasons why the British Government had been led to take this decision. "It is not possible," Lord Salisbury said, "to review the events which ended in the dismissal of the European Ministers without the conviction that the Khedive never sincerely accepted the limitations of his power proposed by the Commission, and was quite resolved to resume his full prerogative as soon as the immediate purposes of his apparent concession should have been answered.

"The two Powers have given to His Highness ample time to recall any hasty step, and to re-enter, if he had been willing to do so, upon the path of reform marked out by the International Commission. He has refused to avail himself of any such opportunity, and has only employed the interval of delay in renewing the extortion and cruelty by which his Treasury had formerly been filled. It therefore remains for the two Governments, in accordance with the warning addressed to His Highness by them in their despatches of the 25th of April, to consider the course which is necessary for defending their interests in Egypt, and securing the good government of the country.

"It is evident that the remedies for misgovernment hitherto proposed have been tried and have wholly failed. . . . Any further attempt on the part of the Powers to assist the Khedive in averting the consequences of his own misgovernment can have no other effect than to make them responsible for it in the future. His power to frustrate all projects of reform, and his resolve to use it, have been sufficiently demonstrated by events.

"If Egypt were a country in whose past history the Powers had no share, and to whose future destiny it was possible for them to be indifferent, their wisest course would be to renounce at this point all further concern with the relations between the Egyptian Ruler and his subjects. But, to England at least, this policy is impossible. The geographical situation of Egypt, as well as the responsibility which the English Government have in past times incurred for the actual conditions under which it exists as a State, make it impossible to leave it to its fate. They are bound, both by duty and interest, to do all that lies in their power to arrest misgovernment, before it results in the material ruin and almost incurable disorder to which it is evident by other Oriental examples that such misgovernment will necessarily lead.

"In the case of Egypt, the evil has not yet gone so far but that it may be arrested by changes of small scope and immediate operation. The sole obstacle to reform appears to lie in the character of its Ruler. His financial embarrassments lead almost inevitably to oppression, and his bad faith frustrates all friendly efforts to apply a remedy. There seems to be no doubt that a change of policy can only be obtained by a change of Ruler.

"It may be the duty of the Western Powers to submit these considerations to the Sultan, to whose Firman the Khedive owes his power. But before taking a step so grave, and which, in its results, may possibly be disastrous not only to the Khedive but to his family, it is right, in the first instance, to intimate to the Khedive the conclusion at which the two Powers have arrived, and to give him the opportunity of withdrawing, under favourable and honourable conditions, from a position which his character and his past career have unfitted him to fill."

When the British and French Consuls-General communicated to the Khedive the views entertained by their Governments, he asked that time should be given to him to consider the matter. On June 21, he informed them that he had referred the question to the Sultan. There was, in fact, some hope of support from Constantinople. The Khedive had sent a special agent to the Sultan. Money had been spent in bribes. Moreover, the jealousy of the Sultan had been excited by representations that the two Western Powers intended to disregard his sovereign rights. The Khedive, therefore, felt confident of support, and for a moment it appeared probable that support would be accorded to him. The European Powers were, however, now all combined. Germany, Austria, Russia, and finally Italy, advised the Khedive to abdicate. Italian adhesion was, however, somewhat tardily given. Italy had throughout shown some disposition to support Ismail Pasha.

It required some strong remonstrances on the part of the Ambassadors at Constantinople to prevent encouragement being given to the Khedive by the Sultan. If, however, the Khedive were to be deposed, the Sultan preferred that the act of deposition should emanate from himself, rather than that it should result from any independent action taken by the two Western Powers. On the night of June 24, M. Tricou, the French Consul-General, received information from Constantinople to the effect that the Porte had decided upon the deposition of the Khedive and the appointment of Halim Pasha as his successor. Although it was past midnight, Sir Frank Lascelles, M. Tricou, and Baron de Saurma, the German Consul-General, went at once to the Khedive's palace. "I have been informed," Sir Frank Lascelles wrote, "that when it was known in the harem that the Europeans demanded to see the Khedive at that hour of the night, there was a scene of indescribable confusion. The Princess Mother, fearing the existence of a plot to assassinate her son, implored His Highness not to receive us, but on hearing that the Europeans consisted of the representatives of Germany, France, and England, and were accompanied by Chérif Pasha, the Khedive himself pointed out that there could be no danger for his life, and consented to receive us. His Highness, who was evidently in a state of great excitement, gave me the impression of scarcely knowing what was passing. He, however, remained perfectly firm in his intention not to abdicate."

On the morrow, June 25, there was a last flicker of resistance. A Khedivial Decree was prepared under which the army was to be increased to 150,000 men. Some wild proposals, having for their object the inundation of the country round Alexandria, were also discussed. But the Khedive was conscious that the game was played out. Many of his valuables had already been embarked on board his yacht at Alexandria.

In the meanwhile, the diplomatic pressure brought to bear at Constantinople had produced its effect. The Powers of Europe were evidently determined that Prince Tewfik, and not Prince Halim, should be Khedive of Egypt. On June 26, the Sultan sent a telegram to Cairo addressed "to the ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha," in which the following passage occurred :—

"Il est prouvé que votre maintien au poste de Khédive ne pouvait avoir d'autre résultat que de multiplier et d'aggraver les difficultés présentes. Par conséquent, Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, à la suite de la décision de son Conseil des Ministres, a décidé de nommer au poste de Khédive Son Excellence Mehemet Tewfik Pacha, et l'Iradé Impérial concernant ce sujet vient d'être promulgué. Cette haute décision est communiquée à Son Excellence par une autre dépêche, et je vous invite à vous retirer des affaires gouvernementales, conformément à l'ordre de sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan."

At the same time, another telegram was sent to Prince Tewfik nominating him Khedive of Egypt.

It was clear that further resistance was useless. The last hope of support had disappeared. The Khedive sent for Prince Tewfik, and, in the presence of his Ministers, made over his power to him. The scene is said to have been affecting. Both father and son showed signs of emotion.

It was desirable that there should be no delay in the inauguration of the new Khedive. It took place at once. At 6.30 P.M., on June 26, 1879, Sir Frank Lascelles telegraphed to Lord Salisbury:—"A royal salute on Prince Tewfik's accession was fired this evening from the citadel, where His Highness held an official reception, which was attended by the whole diplomatic and consular corps, the Ministers, and Government officials, and a large number of people." A crowd had collected in the streets of Cairo, but the whole transaction had been so expeditiously concluded that the mass of the population were unaware of the deposition of Ismail Pasha until they heard the guns of the citadel thundering in honour of his successor.

One further scene remained to be enacted. It was undesirable that the ex-Khedive should remain in Egypt. There was some question of his going to Constantinople, and also to Smyrna. He eventually decided to seek an asylum at Naples, where the King of Italy had placed a residence at his disposal.[1] At 11.30 A.M. on June 30, Ismail Pasha left Cairo for Alexandria. He gave it to be understood that he did not wish any official notice to be taken of his departure. None of the foreign representatives were, therefore, present at the railway station. A large crowd, however, assembled to witness his departure. The ladies of the harem, dressed in black, were present in carriages outside the station and were loud in their lamentations. Before entering his carriage, Ismail Pasha addressed a few words to the people who were present, telling them that on leaving Egypt he confided his son, the Khedive, to their care. The latter then took leave of his father and of his brothers, who accompanied Ismail Pasha.

---

[1] At a later period, Ismail Pasha went to Constantinople. He died on March 2, 1895.

An eye-witness stated that "the scene was so affecting that there were few among the spectators who were able to refrain from tears."

On arrival at Alexandria, Ismail Pasha embarked on board his yacht, the *Mahroussa*. Mr. Calvert, the British Vice-Consul at Alexandria, reported that "the deck of the *Mahroussa* was crowded with officials and European residents who had come to take leave of Ismail Pasha. His Highness met everywhere, both on shore and on board, with marked respect and consideration. Though his features bore the traces of strong recent emotion, he bore up manfully, and was quite cheerful, addressing a pleasant word and thanks to every one who took leave of him, and shaking hands."

If Ismail Pasha's rule had been bad, his fall was at least dignified. His worst enemies must have pitied a man in the hour of his distress who had stood so high and who had fallen so low. "Who," says Bacon, "can see worse days than he that, yet living, doth follow at the funeral of his own reputation?" Any chance moralist who may have watched the *Mahroussa* steaming out of Alexandria harbour on that summer afternoon must perforce have heaved a sigh over one of the most striking instances that the world has ever known of golden opportunities lost.

It may be that the events of Ismail Pasha's reign in Egypt are too recent for an impartial verdict to be passed upon them. Neither perhaps do I possess all the qualifications necessary to strict impartiality. At the same time, I am quite unconscious of any bias in the matter. In the course of this narrative, I have criticised Ismail Pasha's conduct, but I never felt any personal dislike to the man. My feelings throughout all these struggles were inspired by pity rather than by anger. I always felt that if Ismail Pasha had fallen into better hands in the early part of his career, the recent history of Egypt might have been changed. Probably few individuals ever experienced more fully than Ismail what has aptly been termed "the lonely friendlessness of selfish power."[1] The conduct of those who flattered him, and then preyed upon him, cannot be too strongly condemned. But as regards himself, however severe may be the censure inflicted on him, it must be admitted that there are some extenuating circumstances. He wished to introduce European civilisation into Egypt at a rapid rate, but he had little idea of how to set about the work. He had neither the knowledge nor the experience necessary to carry out the task. It should be remarked that Ismail was utterly uneducated. When Mr. Nassau Senior was returning to Europe in 1855, he found that an English coachman, who had been in Ismail's service, was his fellow-passenger. The man's account of Ismail's private life is worth quoting. There can be little doubt of its accuracy. "Ismail," he said, "and his brother Mustapha, when they were in Paris, used to buy whatever they saw; they were like children, nothing was fine enough for them; they bought carriages and horses like those of Queen Victoria or the Emperor, and let them spoil for want of shelter and cleaning. . . . The people he liked best to talk to were his servants, the lads who brought him his pipes and stood before him with their arms crossed. He sometimes sat on his sofa and smoked, and talked to them for hours, all about women and such things. . . . I have known him sometimes try to read a French novel, but he would be two hours getting through a page.

---

[1] Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 379.

Once or twice, I saw him attempt to write. His letters were half an inch high, like those of a child's copybook. I don't think that he ever finished a sentence."[1]

My personal relations with Ismail Pasha were of a friendly nature, a fact which redounds to his credit, for if there was one person in Egypt against whom he had a right to bear a grudge, it was myself. I took a prominent part in the events which brought about his deposition, and especially in the nomination of the Commission of Inquiry, a blow from which he never recovered. Ismail Pasha was not a man who bore malice.

Whenever and by whomsoever the verdict on his rule in Egypt is passed, it can scarcely be anything but unfavourable. Few people have enjoyed a more enviable position than that of Ismail Pasha when he became Khedive of Egypt. He was absolute ruler over a docile people, inhabiting one of the most fertile spots in the world. He had power, rank, and a degree of wealth such as has been given to few individuals. With reasonable prudence he could have satisfied every legitimate ambition, and left a name which posterity would have revered. All this he threw away. He fell a victim to *ὕβρις*, the insolent abuse of power. A great Nemesis fell upon the Egyptian Crœsus. He squandered his wealth, and when, finally, he was deposed at the behests of the Powers of Europe, there were not a dozen of his own countrymen, albeit they disliked the interference of the foreigner, who did not think that he had merited his fate.

It is frequently the habit of deposed Sovereigns to think that their former subjects long for their return to power. I do not know if Ismail Pasha ever cherished thoughts of this description. If so, he was wrong. From the date of his deposition, he was politically defunct, and his former subjects would now regard his reign as a bad dream were it not that they still suffer, and that their children's children must continue to suffer, from the effects of his misrule.

---

[1] *Conversations, etc.*, vol. ii. p. 228.

The centenary of Mehemet Ali's birth has recently been celebrated in Egypt. National *fêtes* are reasonable enough when they call to mind the occurrence of some event for which the gratitude of posterity is due. Thus, it is not unnatural that the French, forgetful of the horrors which accompanied the fall of the Bastille, should recognise that event as symbolical of the dawn of a new era, and should, therefore, have raised the date on which it occurred to the dignity of a national anniversary. It is also perfectly natural that the Egyptians should commemorate the birth of the remarkable man who gave their country a separate administrative existence. Nevertheless, another very suitable anniversary for the modern Egyptians to celebrate would be the day on which Ismail Pasha, under pressure from the Powers of Europe, abdicated. That day marked the advent of a new era. It should be borne in grateful remembrance by the present and future generations of Egyptians. Ismail Pasha's abdication sounded the death-knell of arbitrary personal rule in Egypt. It may be hoped and believed that that rule can never be revived; but in spite of the strongest guarantees which can be recorded on paper, there would unquestionably be a considerable risk of its revival in some form or another if the British occupation of the country were allowed to terminate prematurely. When it is quite clear that this risk has ceased to exist, the question of the cessation of the occupation will assume a new aspect. In the minds of all well-informed and calm observers it seems, however, probable that some long while must elapse before they can feel assured that this political transformation has really taken place.

# PART II

# THE ARÁBI REVOLT

August 1879–August 1883

*The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hands of the people of the north.*

Jeremiah xlvi. 24.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE INAUGURATION OF TEWFIK

### August–November 1879

State of the country—Chérif Pasha's Ministry—The Khedive assumes the Presidency of the Council—Ministry of Riaz Pasha—Relations between the Khedive and his Ministers—The Sultan cancels the Firman of 1873—Objections of France and England—The Mohammedan law of succession—The right to make Commercial Conventions, and to contract loans—The Army—The Khedive's investiture—Appointment of Controllers—Relations between the Government and the Controllers—Division of work between the Controllers—The Commission of Liquidation.

With the deposition of Ismail Pasha, the main obstacle which had heretofore stood in the way of Egyptian reform was removed. His sinister influence was, however, felt for long after his abdication. He had, indeed, left a *damnosa hereditas* to his successor. The Treasury was bankrupt. The discipline of the army had been shaken. Every class of Egyptian society was discontented; the poor by reason of the oppressive measures of their ruler; the rich because the privileges which they enjoyed were threatened; the Europeans because the money owing to them was not paid, and because, in the general confusion which existed, trade was naturally depressed. The Powers of Europe had, for a while, combined in the presence of a common danger, but the ceaseless jar of petty international rivalries was sure to make itself felt whenever any question of local interest was discussed. The Arab hated and mistrusted the Turk. The Turk hated and mistrusted the European. European assistance was necessary, but it was difficult to decide in what form it should be given. Reforms dictated in the best interests of the country would be misunderstood and misrepresented. It was well-nigh impossible that they should bear immediate fruit, whilst any temporary unpopularity which might arise from their adoption would of necessity devolve mainly on the alien and Christian elements in the Government. Time would have to elapse before the sorely-tried people of Egypt would begin to see dimly, through a thick mist of ignorance and misrepresentation, that some material benefits might accrue to them from foreign interference. At the head of affairs was a young Prince animated with the best intentions, but wanting in experience. His own predisposition, as well as the censures which his father's oppressive system of government had evoked, alike led him to favour a reign of law and order. But the proper administration of justice was impossible until law-courts had been established and qualified judges appointed. The period of transition from an arbitrary to a legal system of government was to be not only painful but dangerous. The minds of the people had been unsettled by frequent discussions about organic changes. "It is unwise," said one of England's greatest political thinkers, "to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread."[1] The habits of obedience, which the Egyptians had inherited from their forefathers, had been rudely shaken. All this ferment was not to settle down at once. A more serious collapse of the State machinery than any which had yet taken place was to occur before the calm waters of peaceful progress could be reached. A well-known

---

[1] Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution.*

Conservative statesman in conversation with me once gave utterance to an opinion which involves the *ne plus ultra* of anti-conservative principles. "The East," he said, "is languishing for want of a Revolution." This statement is true; for the violent changes from one Amurath to another, which Oriental history has frequently recorded, have generally been the result, not of revolution, but of palace intrigue. The Egyptians were now to try whether their lot could be improved by a movement, whose leading feature was that it combined some vague national aspirations, which were incapable of realisation, with the time-honoured tactics of a mutinous prætorian guard. In the meanwhile, the machine of State worked laboriously, but apparently with some fair prospect of success. It was not till the Egyptian Sisyphus had got his stone some little way up the hill that it escaped from his grasp and rolled back again into the slough of anarchy. Then all the work had to be begun again, but under new conditions which augured better for the final result.

Before the new State machine could be got to work, the various parts of the machinery had to be adjusted. A Ministry had to be formed. The degree to which the Khedive was to take an active part in the administration had to be settled. The relations between the Sultan and the Khedive had to be regulated. The form in which Europeans should be associated with the government of the country had to be decided. It was also essential to adopt measures which should place the new relations between the Egyptian Government and their creditors on a legal footing.

The Khedive charged Chérif Pasha with the formation of a Ministry. He at once submitted to the Khedive a project for a constitution of which His Highness disapproved. On August 18, therefore, he tendered his resignation, which was accepted. The Khedive resolved to retain the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in his own hands for the present. His Highness explained to Sir Frank Lascelles the reasons why he had disapproved of Chérif Pasha's proposals. "He was aware," Sir Frank Lascelles wrote, "that it would be said that his action was an attempt to return to the old system of personal government. He could assure me that he had no wish to do so; but that at present liberal institutions were utterly unsuited to the country, and the constitution which had been submitted to him was nothing more than a *décor de théâtre*. . . . He was himself responsible for the government of the country, and had determined to take his share of the labour, and not to shelter himself behind an unreal and illusory constitution." Chérif Pasha, on the other hand, told Sir Frank Lascelles that, though he was personally glad to be relieved of his duties, "as an Egyptian, he regretted the return to personal power. There were many persons both in and outside the palace who would be glad, for their own ends, to see the absolute power of the Khedive re-established, but it was a real misfortune for the country if it should again fall under the rule of an absolute Sovereign."

There can be little doubt that the Khedive acted wisely in declining the proposals submitted to him by Chérif Pasha. Any Egyptian constitution must of necessity at that time have been a mere *décor de théâtre*.[1] The only form of government suitable to

---

[1] The methods of government which found favour about this time amongst many of those who favoured, or pretended to favour constitutional government, may be judged from a statement made in 1903 by Sheikh Mohammed Abdou to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt (*Secret History*, etc., p. 493). Sultan Pasha, the Sheikh said, "had promised to bring petitions from every Notable in Egypt in favour of the Constitution. This was true, for all the Omdehs were angry with Riaz for having put down their habit of employing forced labour." In other words, Riaz Pasha, who was supposed to be a somewhat extreme representative of personal

Egypt was a despotism, but it would have to be a benevolent despotism, which would be under some effective control. The control was to be sought more in the careful selection of the individuals to whom power was confided than in any endeavour to copy European institutions, which were uncongenial to the manners and customs of the people and to the condition of society which then existed in Egypt. Nevertheless, the attitude assumed at this moment by Chérif Pasha merits a word of sympathy. He was a perfectly honest man. He was convinced of the harm done by the absolute rule of the ex-Khedive. He was slow to believe that, with a change of despot, the character of the despotism would undergo any material alteration. Although, therefore, his views as to the best system of governing the country appear to have been unsuited to the circumstances of the time, both his proposals and his resignation did him credit personally.

The arrangement under which the Khedive was to be his own Prime Minister was of doubtful wisdom. Fortunately, it did not last long. Riaz Pasha was summoned to Egypt, and on September 22 was charged with the formation of a Ministry. The principles of Ismail Pasha's Rescript of August 28, 1878, were maintained. Riaz Pasha was named President of the Council, but the Khedive reserved to himself the right to preside at the meetings of the Council whenever he thought it desirable to do so.

The duration of the new Ministry was much longer than that of its predecessors. One of the reasons why it acquired a certain character of stability was that the relations between the Khedive and his Ministers were at last placed on a footing

---

government, was endeavouring to abolish the iniquitous corvée system, whilst the constitutionalists hoped that, through the introduction of free institutions, it would be found possible to ensure its continuance.

which was adapted to the actual requirements of the country. A compromise was effected between the system of excluding the Khedive altogether from the exercise of any real power and that under which his authority would be absolute. It was essential to associate the Khedive with the government of the country. This was secured by according to him the right to preside at the Council whenever he thought fit to do so. On the other hand, it was undesirable that the Khedive should be his own Prime Minister. Apart from the risk of a return to the old régime, which the adoption of this system would have involved, there was the further objection that the ruler of the State would have become personally responsible for every act of the administration. The natural remedy for any serious defect in the government of a State is a change of Ministry. If the Khedive had become his own Prime Minister, this safety-valve would have been removed. A case might have arisen in which a change of policy would have been well-nigh impossible without a change of Khedive. Of course, much depended upon the spirit in which the compromise was to be worked. Had the Khedive meant to evade the spirit of the Rescript of August 1878 he might have done so. On the contrary, however, he loyally accepted the principle of ministerial responsibility. The system worked well, and although many difficulties of a different nature were in store for Egypt, the question of the part which Tewfik Pasha was to take in the government of the country was finally set at rest by the arrangement made in September 1879.

The settlement of the relations between Turkey and Egypt gave rise to considerable difficulties, which were only arranged after a somewhat stormy diplomatic negotiation. The Porte made a determined effort to tighten its hold on Egypt.

Simultaneously with the issue of the order deposing Ismail Pasha, an Imperial Iradé was signed repealing the Firman of 1873. The issue of a new Firman was necessary in consequence of this action of the Sultan. The Porte showed great disinclination to submit the terms of the Firman before issue to the British and French Governments. The result was that peremptory orders had to be sent to the Ambassadors at Constantinople. The Sultan and his advisers were made to understand that, in their endeavour to tighten their hold on Egypt, they ran a risk that the country would escape from their grasp altogether. They therefore yielded. The principle that the terms of the Firman must be discussed with the French and British Governments was accepted. A discussion then commenced as to the stipulations which were to be incorporated into the new Firman.

In 1873, Ismail Pasha, in return for large sums of money lavished at Constantinople, had obtained four concessions from the Sultan. In the first place, the Mohammedan law of succession was set aside. Primogeniture was for the future to be the principle under which succession to the Khedivate was to be regulated. In the second place, the right to conclude Commercial Conventions with other Powers was conceded to Egypt. In the third place, full power was given to the Khedive to contract foreign loans. In the fourth place, the Khedive obtained the right to fix the strength of the Egyptian army at any figure he might consider necessary without reference to Constantinople. The Sultan now wished to cancel these concessions.

The views entertained by the British and French Governments upon the points at issue were not altogether identical. The traditional policy of

France favoured, if not an independent Egypt, at all events the relaxation of the bonds which united the suzerain and his feudatory. The French Government were, therefore, opposed to the restrictive measures which the Sultan wished to adopt. More especially M. Fournier, who was then French Ambassador at Constantinople, insisted strongly upon opposition being offered to them. Successive British Governments, on the other hand, had for a long time past been averse to any measures which tended towards the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Except in the matter of the succession, Lord Salisbury did not consider the proposals made by the Sultan as open to any great objections on their own merits. Moreover, the spokesman of the British Government at Constantinople was Sir Austen Layard, a strong Turcophile.

On the question of the succession, however, the two Governments were agreed. Under the Mohammedan law of succession the eldest member of the family is Heir-Apparent. This practice has, during the whole course of Ottoman history, been a fertile source of intrigue, and has often led to much bloodshed. The maxim of Bajazet I.—"Better the death of a Prince than the loss of a province"—is still inscribed over one of the inner gates of the old Imperial Palace at Constantinople. The slaughter of collateral branches of the family is, in fact, a means of protection against conspiracy which the rulers of Oriental States have not unfrequently adopted.[1]

---

[1] It cannot be doubted that the practice of murdering or keeping in confinement the heir to the throne, more especially if he showed any signs of ability, has been one of the many causes of Ottoman decay. For instance, Sultan Ibrahim (1640-48) was the sole surviving brother of Amurath IV., the remainder having been put to death at the time of the latter's succession. On his deathbed, Amurath ordered Ibrahim, who had been kept for eight years in prison, to be killed, but the order

The British and French Governments, therefore, insisted that the principle of primogeniture should be ratified in the new Firman. On this point, the Porte yielded.

"With regard," Lord Salisbury wrote, "to the limit to be assigned to the military and naval forces which the Khedive may maintain, and his power to negotiate Commercial Conventions, Her Majesty's Government will not object." The French Government, on the other hand, attached great importance to the question of the right to make Commercial Conventions, with the result that the Porte yielded. The new Firman was on this point substantially a reproduction of the Firman of 1873.

The Porte, however, gained its point as regards the restrictions which it wished to place on the strength of the Egyptian army. The new Firman laid down that in time of peace the army was not to exceed 18,000 men.

As regards the power of borrowing money, Lord Salisbury wrote: "The power to contract loans has been so grievously abused, and with such disastrous results to the prosperity of Egypt, that it might advantageously be withdrawn altogether, for it is quite clear that the country can bear no further attempts to bolster up its credit by such means." The French Government would have been glad to preserve the Firman of 1873 intact, but seeing that the British Government were lukewarm on the subject, and that they had already achieved a diplomatic victory on the two

---

was not executed. When Amurath died, Creasy says (*Ottoman Turks*, p. 259), "Ibrahim came forth and mounted the Turkish throne, which received in him a selfish voluptuary, in whom long imprisonment and protracted terror had debased whatever spirit nature might have originally bestowed, and who was as rapacious and bloodthirsty as he was cowardly and mean."

The practice is of very ancient date. Jehu, on obtaining possession of the throne, killed the seventy sons of Ahab. — 2 Kings x. 1-11.

important questions of the succession and the right to make Commercial Conventions, they agreed to the withdrawal from the Khedive of the right to contract loans.

It is difficult to prophesy, especially in politics. No one could foresee that, a few years later, the British Government would find the work of reform in Egypt to some extent hindered by the restrictions which, in 1879, were considered unobjectionable and even beneficial. That, however, is what actually happened. French diplomacy had, in fact, unconsciously worked to facilitate the future task of the British Government, whilst the latter, with equal unconsciousness, had used their influence to place obstacles in their own path.

On August 14, the ceremony of reading the Firman of Investiture took place in Cairo.

The next question which had to be decided was the form in which Europeans should be associated with the government of Egypt. Immediately after the Khedive's accession, a letter was addressed by Chérif Pasha to the representatives of England and France in Egypt, expressing a hope that, if Controllers were nominated under the Decree of November 18, 1876, their functions would be limited to investigation and verification, and that they would not be invested with any administrative or executive powers. In reply to this communication, the Consuls-General were authorised to state that "the two Governments accepted in principle His Highness's offer to re-establish the office of Controllers-General, and that the details respecting their powers and functions would form the subject of a further communication."

Three questions had then to be decided. In the first place, who were to be the Controllers? In the second place, what were to be the relations between them and the Egyptian Government? In the third place, how was the work to be divided between them?

Perhaps the first of these questions was the most important of the three. More depended on the character and personal influence of the individuals who were chosen than on the special functions which might be assigned to them by a Khedivial Decree. The situation of the European advisers of the Khedive would, necessarily, be one of great difficulty. They would have to guide with as little appearance of guiding as possible. They could not hope to succeed unless two conditions were fulfilled. The first was that they should be to some extent in sympathy with the Egyptian Government. The second was that they should be in sympathy with each other. If the more distasteful aspects of European interference were constantly being presented to the Egyptian Ministers without any compensatory advantages being derived from European assistance in the defence of Egyptian interests, another breakdown was sure to ensue before long. Further, the selection of a Gallophobe Englishman, or of an Anglophobe Frenchman, would have ensured the failure of the experiment which was about to be made.

The choice of the French Government fell on M. de Blignières. Lord Salisbury offered the post of English Controller to me. After some hesitation,[1] I accepted the offer.

As regards the relations which were to exist between the Egyptian Government and the Controllers, there was no difficulty in meeting the Khedive's wishes. M. de Blignières and myself, who were consulted on the subject, were of opinion that the system of direct government by Europeans was unsuitable to the circumstances which then existed in Egypt, and that it would be preferable to give us general powers of supervision and inspection, trusting to the exercise of personal influence to do the rest. The Decree, which was eventually issued, laid down that the most ample powers of investigation were to be conferred on the Controllers, but that they were not to be invested with any administrative functions. They could only make suggestions. They were to have seats in the Council of Ministers, with *voix consultatives*; that is to say, they might give their opinions, but they had no right to vote.

---

[1] My intention at this time had been to stand for East Norfolk at the next General Election. The acceptance of Lord Salisbury's offer made me abandon the idea of entering Parliament. I think that it was in 1880 that, happening to meet Mr. Gladstone at Sandringham, I spoke to him on this subject. He told me that he thought I was quite right not to enter Parliament as all the principal questions which interested Liberals had been solved. Very shortly afterwards, the Home Rule project was launched on an astonished world.

It was further provided that the Controllers could not be dismissed without the consent of their respective Governments. When, three years later, Egypt was occupied by British troops, a discussion took place as to whether the Liberal or the Conservative Government was responsible for the events which led up to the occupation. The point is now one of purely historical interest, and at no time was it of much interest save to party politicians. It may, however, be observed that, in the discussions which took place in 1882, the politicians on the Liberal side of the House of Commons maintained that the necessity for British interference was mainly due to the fact that in 1879 the Control, which was formerly financial, became political. Mr. Gladstone, speaking on July 27, 1882, said: "What is a political control? I assert that this was not a political control then (*i.e.* prior to 1879) because the Government were not concerned in it. The fact that the Egyptians chose to establish foreign Controllers, an arrangement attended with great benefits to the people of England (? Egypt), was not necessarily an arrangement entailing foreign interference, because they retained the right to dismiss the Controllers, but in the year 1879, in depriving them of that right, you brought foreign intervention into the heart of the country, and established, in the strictest sense of the phrase, a 'political control.'" There is some force in this argument. Nevertheless, as will appear at a later portion of this narrative, the main responsibility for the British occupation, in so far as it was due to events which were in any way capable of control, would appear to lie with the Government of Mr. Gladstone rather than with that of Lord Salisbury which preceded him.

A further question, which had to be decided, was how the work was to be divided between the two Controllers.

Under the Decree of November 18, 1876, the Englishman was Controller-General of Receipts, and the Frenchman Controller-General of Expenditure. Subsequently, when European Ministers were appointed, the Englishman was placed in charge of the Ministry of Finance, and the Frenchman of the Ministry of Public Works. Under both these arrangements, the preponderating influence was in the hands of the Englishman. The French chafed at their position of inferiority, and it appeared both unwise and unnecessary to insist upon a position of marked superiority being given to the Englishman. Either M. de Blignières and I could, or could not work together. If we could do so, any distinction between us was unnecessary, and would only serve to wound the *amour propre* of the French without producing any useful result. If we could not do so, the collapse of the system was inevitable, and could not be averted by any definition of our respective functions. Various proposals were made with a view to precise definition, such as that one Controller should deal with Upper and the other with Lower Egypt. But in the end it was wisely decided to leave the matter to the discretion of the Controllers themselves.

The last point which had to be settled was the method under which legal effect should be given to the relations about to be established between the Egyptian Government and their creditors. In other words, the bankruptcy of Egypt had to be sanctioned by law. The two reports of the Commission of Inquiry had prepared the way for a settlement, but it was essential that it should be made binding on all the parties concerned. On April 2, 1880, after some long and tedious discussions, a Khedivial Decree was issued instituting a Commission of Liquidation with full powers to regulate the financial situation. The Great Powers bound themselves by anticipation to accept the conclusions at which the Commissioners might arrive. Sir Rivers Wilson was named President of the Commission. The four Commissioners of the Debt were named members. An additional French member (M. Liron d'Airolles) was named so as to give France the same degree of representation as England. Germany was represented by M. de Trescow. The new Commission of Liquidation was, in fact, the old Commission of Inquiry "writ large"—that is to say, with extended powers and with the addition of a German representative. The Controllers were not appointed members of the Commission. The interests of the creditors were strongly represented, and it was thought both just and politic that the Controllers should stand outside and represent the interests of the Egyptian Government and people, rather than those of the creditors. Without European assistance, the

Egyptian Ministers would scarcely be able to resist the pressure which the Commission was almost certain to bring to bear on them in the bondholding interest.

The various essential parts of the State machine were thus adjusted. A new Khedive ruled. The relations between the Khedive and his Ministers were placed on a satisfactory footing. A Prime Minister had been nominated who had taken an active part in opposing the abuses prevalent during the reign of Ismail Pasha. The relations between the Sultan and the Khedive had been regulated in such a way as to ensure the latter against any excessive degree of Turkish interference. The system which had been devised for associating Europeans with the Government held out good promise of success, inasmuch as it was in accordance with the Khedive's own views. Lastly, an International Commission had been created with full powers to arrange matters between the Egyptian Government and their creditors.

It now remained to be seen how the machine would work. There were great difficulties still to be overcome, but on the whole the prospect was brighter than at any previous moment during recent times.

# CHAPTER X

## THE DUAL CONTROL

### November 1879–December 1880

Working of the Control—Relations between the two Controllers—And between the Controllers and the Egyptian Government—Delay in paying the Tribute—Interest on the Unified Debt paid at 4 per cent—Financial scheme proposed by the Controllers—The Budget for 1880—Reforms in the fiscal system—Confidence inspired by the Control—Reports on the state of the country—The Law of Liquidation—The military danger.

On November 30, 1879, I wrote to Sir Edward Malet, who had been appointed Consul-General in Egypt: "On the whole, I think the start has been favourable. If we can only sit tight for six months, I believe we may pull the thing through. But I devoutly hope that there will be no change of Ministry, or any unexpected event, such as often happens in the East, to upset everything and to oblige a new beginning to be made." Time, and a stable political situation,—these were the two principal conditions which were essential to success. Only the first of these conditions was, to a very limited extent, fulfilled.

The Ministry of Riaz Pasha lasted for nearly two years, and an acute observer who was on the spot subsequently wrote that "with all its faults it was the best administration which Egypt has enjoyed before or since." [1]

---

[1] *Khedives and Pashas*, p. 134. This was written in 1884, that is to say, before the reforms introduced subsequent to the British occupation had produced much result.

The main reasons why the machine of Government worked fairly well for a time were twofold.

In the first place, the best relations existed between the two Controllers. In the second place, a *modus vivendi* was found between the Controllers and the Egyptian Government.

It has been mentioned in the previous chapter that before the Controllers-General were appointed, some discussion took place as to how the work should be divided between them. Eventually, M. de Blignières and I were left to settle the matter between ourselves. The solution which we adopted was a simple one. We never attempted to solve the question at all. We were in constant communication with each other, and we worked in common. Any precise definition of our respective functions would have been difficult, and was quite unnecessary.

It was a more difficult matter to establish friendly relations with the Egyptian Government. Riaz Pasha was thoroughly honest and well-intentioned, but he was incapable of dealing unaided with the perplexing financial questions which at that time presented themselves for solution. He saw the necessity for European assistance, but, at the same time, in whatever form it was given, it was distasteful to him. He was himself a reformer, and had courageously protested against the abuses of Ismail Pasha's time, but he was slow to accept the inevitable conclusion that no reforms were possible without European guidance and assistance. *Qui veut la fin veut les moyens*, formed no part of Riaz Pasha's political creed. It was clear that, under these circumstances, the best hope of success lay in the Controllers submitting themselves to a self-denying ordinance. They would have to pull the strings behind the scenes, but appear on the stage as little as possible.

Another essential requisite to success was that both the Egyptian Ministers and the Egyptian people should see that the Controllers were of some use to them. Duty and justice alike pointed to the necessity of standing as a buffer between the Egyptian Government and their creditors. The Ministers had neither the strength to oppose the pressure which, in European interests, was brought to bear on them, nor the knowledge requisite to resist it with effect. The policy adopted by M. de Blignières and myself was to associate ourselves, as much as possible, with the Egyptian Government, and to defend them against any excessive demands and encroachments on their rights. By adopting this line of conduct, we hoped soon to inspire confidence, and gradually to disabuse the minds both of the Ministers and of the Egyptian people of the prejudices which were entertained against Europeans. If once we could inspire confidence, our advice, we thought, would generally be followed, and our influence could be used to the benefit both of the country and of the creditors.

Opportunities for giving effect to these principles were not slow to present themselves. Heavy instalments of the Tribute, as also the half-yearly interest on the Unified Debt, had to be paid. Money was not forthcoming to meet these engagements. M. de Blignières and I had not yet arrived in Egypt. Our advice was requested by telegraph. The Egyptian Government flinched at the responsibility of committing an act of insolvency. They asked us whether they ought to borrow money in order to meet their engagements. The reply could not be doubtful. If the Tribute could not be paid, so much the worse for the Tribute. The same was to be said as regards the interest on the Unified Debt. The main thing was, once and for all, to abandon the ruinous expedients of the past. The employés of the Government must, in the first instance, be paid; then the Tribute, whenever there was money enough to pay it. As for the Unified Debt, the taxes should on no account be taken in advance. If, when the interest fell due, the revenues pledged to the service of the debt were insufficient to meet the whole charge, a dividend should be distributed.

The letter which we wrote from Paris on this subject was published. One result of our advice was that the Tribute due to the Porte remained unpaid for some little while. A further result was that the full interest on the Unified Debt was never paid. The amount due on November 1 was £1,989,000. The rate of interest fixed by the Decree of November 18, 1876, viz. 6 per cent, had not as yet been legally changed. When the 1st of November arrived, only £1,147,000 was in the hands of the Commissioners of the Debt. Interest at the rate of 4 per cent was distributed to the bondholders.

Directly after we arrived in Egypt, another step of importance was taken. Difficulties were being encountered in arranging for a Commission of Liquidation to make a final settlement of Egyptian financial affairs. In the meanwhile, both the country and the creditors were suffering. We therefore recommended the Egyptian Government to cut the diplomatic knot by preparing their own scheme, which could be submitted to the Commission of Liquidation, if one were appointed, and which could be put into operation without the sanction of any law, in the event of no agreement being arrived at as regards a Commission. The suggestion was accepted, and, in concert with the Egyptian authorities, we proceeded to prepare a scheme.

On January 1, 1880, we submitted our report to the Khedive. "Experience," we said, "has shown that the main defect of all former attempts to regulate the Egyptian financial situation has been that they have been too optimistic." It was essential to steer clear of that danger. The Commission of Inquiry had recommended that the interest on the Unified Debt should be fixed at 5 per cent. M. de Blignières and I thought that rate too high. We recommended that only 4 per cent interest should be guaranteed. The public had become accustomed to the idea that the rate of interest would have to be reduced to 4 per cent. When our proposals were made known, so far from producing a bad effect, Unified Stock rose from 51 to 56. A sum of £1,684,000 was due to the bondholders for back interest on coupons which had only been partially paid. "We cannot," we said, "hold out the least hope that these sums will ever be paid."

The next thing was to frame a Budget for the year 1880. The Commission of Inquiry had estimated the Egyptian revenue at £9,067,000. We considered this estimate too high. We reduced it to £8,562,000. A sum of £4,323,000 was required to pay the Tribute and to carry on the administration of the country, thus leaving £4,239,000 available for the creditors of the Egyptian Government.

The reforms proposed by the Commission of Inquiry were at the same time taken in hand. On January 6, 1880, the law of the Moukábala was repealed. On the 18th, an additional tax of £E.150,000 a year was placed on the Ouchouri lands. On January 17, the poll-tax was abolished. It yielded a revenue of £205,000 a year. Persons whose sole employment was agriculture were, at the same time, relieved from the payment of the professional tax. Octroi duties, highway, market, and weighing dues were suppressed in the villages, while in the towns, octroi duties were abolished on 105 articles, mostly agricultural produce. Twenty-four petty taxes of a vexatious nature were abolished by a stroke of the pen.

An important reform was also made in the method of levying the salt tax. Under a law passed in 1873, every individual in Egypt was supposed to consume a certain amount of salt a year. The population of each village was roughly calculated at the time the law was passed, and the tax divided amongst the villagers. The salt tax had, in fact, become a poll-tax, which was paid equally by those who consumed a great deal of salt, and by those who consumed little or none. No account was taken of changes, which might have occurred since 1873, in the population of each village. The defects of this system were obvious. It was abolished, and, in substitution for it, salt was constituted a Government monopoly.

The system of paying the land-tax in kind, which had hitherto existed in some parts of Upper Egypt, had given rise to numerous abuses. It was suppressed. For the future, only payment in money was allowed.

The dates at which the instalments of land-tax were to fall due were fixed in a manner which was convenient to the cultivators. At the same time, the names of the taxpayers belonging to each village were inscribed in one register. An extract from this register was given to each taxpayer, showing the total of the sums which were due from him under the several heads of account, and the dates on which he would be called upon to pay. Of all the reforms which were introduced, this was perhaps the most important and the most beneficial. It was not so much the amount of the land-tax which had heretofore weighed heavily on the country, as the fact that the dates of collection had been regulated without any reference to the convenience of the taxpayers. Further, inasmuch as none of the taxpayers knew with any degree of certainty how much they had to pay, a wide door was opened for extortion and illegal taxation.

At the same time, an improved system was introduced for the payment of the village accountants. Hitherto they had received no fixed salaries, but were allowed to retain a certain proportion of the sums which they collected.

The main reason why these and other reforms were carried into execution was that the Controllers and the Egyptian Ministers worked cordially together. The Control had, in fact, inspired confidence.

I remember one incident which contributed in no small degree to the establishment of this confidence. A British syndicate, on the list of which some influential names figured, was formed with a view to the purchase of the Egyptian Railways. The representatives of the syndicate laid their proposals before the Egyptian Government. The Ministers were anxious as to the attitude which the Controllers, and particularly the British Controller, would take up on this subject. It scarcely occurred to them that any foreigner would do otherwise than push the presumed interests of his own countrymen. Great, therefore, was their surprise when, directly the question was mooted in the Council, I said that I considered that it was for the Ministers to decide whether they would entertain any proposal to purchase the railways; that if they wished to reject the offer which had been made to them, I had no wish to press them to accept it; but that if, on the other hand, they chose to accept the principle, I was ready to go into the details and see that they obtained reasonable terms. They at once decided not to sell the railways. I had anticipated this decision. From that time forth, I never had any serious difficulty in getting my advice accepted. Shortly after the occurrence of this incident, I was asked to see if terms could be arranged with Messrs. Greenfield, the contractors for the construction of the harbour works at Alexandria, to whom a large sum of money was due. The subject was full of difficulties. However, in forty-eight hours I had made an arrangement which seemed reasonable. The contract had to be signed by Riaz Pasha. It was prepared by about three o'clock one afternoon. Messrs. Greenfield's representatives wished to leave Cairo by a train at five o'clock the same afternoon in order to catch a steamer at Alexandria. I thought this difficult, as Riaz Pasha had not yet had the matter explained to him. But I said that I would do my best. I took the contract to Riaz Pasha and explained its provisions to him. He said that if I was satisfied he was ready to accept my conclusions, and accordingly signed the contract without reading it.

On April 30, Sir Edward Malet wrote to the Foreign Office that the Controllers had never been obliged to apply for diplomatic support.

In the course of the summer of 1880, Sir Edward Malet asked the British Consular officers in Egypt to report on the condition of the country. All the Consuls told the same tale. A "general feeling of satisfaction" prevailed. The taxes were being regularly collected. The rate of interest charged by the village money-lenders had fallen by 50 per cent. The value of land had risen, in some cases as much as 100 per cent. The use of the courbash was greatly diminished.

Whilst these reforms were in progress, the difficulties connected with the appointment of a Commission of Liquidation had been overcome. After discussions which lasted some three months, the Commissioners agreed on a law which was submitted to the Khedive and signed by him on July 17, 1880. The Commissioners never sent in any report explanatory of the provisions of the law. In a letter addressed by Sir Rivers Wilson to Lord Granville, who succeeded Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office on April 28, 1880, it was stated that there "was an apprehension lest the divergencies of opinion which manifested themselves on certain points among the Commissioners should render impossible a unanimous report, and lead to reservations or even protests detracting from the authority of the official decisions of the Commission."

It is unnecessary to allude at any length to these differences of opinion. It will be sufficient to say that some members of the Commission, who were supported by the Controllers, were in favour of a cautious estimate of revenue, and an estimate of administrative expenditure which would have left a margin to be applied to the benefit of the country, whilst others took a more optimistic view of the revenue and endeavoured, in the bondholding interest, to keep the administrative expenditure down to the lowest possible figure. Eventually, a compromise was effected. The revenue was taken at £E.8,362,000 for 1880 and 1881, and at £E.8,412,000 for subsequent years. The administrative expenditure was fixed at £E.4,520,000. The rate of interest on the Unified Debt was fixed at 4 per cent. The outstanding portions of the short loans were absorbed into the Unified Debt. A fresh issue of Preference Stock to the extent of £E.5,600,000 was made in order to assist in paying the Floating Debt. The Floating

Debt creditors were divided into three categories, viz. privileged creditors, creditors holding special securities, and ordinary creditors. The privileged creditors were paid in full. Special arrangements were made with the creditors holding special securities. Their claims were reduced by about 7½ per cent. The ordinary creditors received 30 per cent in cash and 70 per cent in Preference Stock. At the price then current, they lost 8½ per cent on the capital of their claims. On the whole, it may be said that the arrangement was a fair one. Its main defect was that too large a proportion of revenue (66 per cent) was mortgaged to the bondholders, whilst the balance left at the disposal of the Government was insufficient.

Thus, matters were improving in Egypt. Several beneficial reforms had been carried out. Some of the worst features of the old oppressive system of government had disappeared. The relations between the Government and their creditors were established on a legal basis, and the charge on account of debt, although still very heavy, had been brought more into conformity than heretofore with the resources of the country. There were, however, some dark specks on the horizon. For instance, a petition was circulated amongst the officers of the army, couched in language which was intended to incite the Moslem population against the European Control. It concluded with a threat that the petitioners might have recourse to the sword to attain their ends.

In June 1880, I was appointed Financial Member of the Governor-General's Council in India. Sir Auckland Colvin succeeded me as Controller-General in Egypt.

In December 1880, I visited Cairo on my way to India. At that time, it was manifest that the only serious danger which threatened Egypt arose from the fact that the discipline of the army had been profoundly shaken by the events of 1878. I warned Riaz Pasha of this danger, and urged him to remedy any grievances of which the army could justly complain, but at the same time to treat severely any signs of insubordination. Riaz Pasha said that my warning was unnecessary, for that not the smallest danger was to be apprehended from the army.

For the moment, therefore, it appeared that Egypt had at last fairly entered the path of reform, and that all that was required was time to complete the superstructure of which the foundations had been so laboriously laid.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE MUTINY OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY

JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 1881

Discontent amongst the officers—They petition Riaz Pasha—Mutiny of February 1—Dismissal of the Minister of War—Imprudent conduct of the Khedive—Conduct of the French Consul-General—Increase of discontent in the army — Mutiny of September 9—Sir Auckland Colvin—Demands of the mutineers—Dismissal of the Ministers — Reluctance of Chérif Pasha to accept office—Nomination of the Chérif Ministry—Chérif Pasha supports the European Control—Arábi is the real ruler of Egypt—His conduct due to fear—Situation created by the mutiny.

SIR JOHN BOWRING wrote in 1840: "The situation of the Osmanlis in Egypt is remarkable; they exercise an extraordinary influence, possess most of the high offices of state, and, indeed, are the depositories of power throughout the country. . . . They are few, but they tyrannise; the Arabs are many, but obey."

After Sir John Bowring wrote these lines, the Egyptians, properly so called, gradually acquired a greater share in the administration of the country, but in 1881, as in 1840, the Turks were the "paramount rulers." In the army, however, the number and influence of the Turks sensibly diminished as time went on. During the reigns of Abbas, Said, and Ismail, the Egyptian element amongst the officers had increased to such an extent as to jeopardise the little that remained of the still dominant Turco-Circassian element.

The large number of officers who were placed on half-pay in 1878 were, for the most part, Egyptians. The discontent due to this cause was increased by the fact that, whilst great and in some degree successful efforts were made to improve the civil administration of the country, nothing was done to improve the condition of the army. The prevailing discontent eventually found expression in a petition addressed by certain officers of the army to Riaz Pasha on January 15, 1881.

Ahmed Arábi, an Egyptian of fellah origin, who was colonel of the 4th Regiment, soon took the lead in the movement which was thus begun. But the prime mover in the preparation of the petition was Colonel Ali Bey Fehmi, who commanded the 1st Regiment. His regiment had been the object of special attention on the part of the Khedive. It guarded the palace. For some time previously, however, there had been a marked cessation of friendly relations between the Khedive and Ali Bey Fehmi. In the East, to be in disgrace is to be in danger. Ali Bey Fehmi determined to strengthen his position by showing that the Egyptian portion of the army could no longer be treated with neglect, and that he himself could not with impunity be dismissed or exiled.

The petition set forth that the Minister of War, Osman Pasha Rifki, had treated the Egyptian officers of the army unjustly in the matter of promotions. He had behaved "as if they were his enemies, or as if God had sent him to venge His wrath on the Egyptians." Officers had been dismissed from the service without any legal inquiry. The petitioners, therefore, made two demands. The first was that the Minister of War should be removed, "as he was incompetent to hold such a high position." The second was that an inquiry should be held into the qualifications of those who had been promoted. "Nothing," it was said, "but merit and knowledge should entitle an officer to promotion, and in these respects we are far superior to those who have been promoted."

This petition was presented by the two Colonels in person to Riaz Pasha. Riaz Pasha was ignorant of military affairs, and had never interfered with the administration of the army, which he considered to be a prerogative of the Khedive. He endeavoured unsuccessfully to induce the Colonels to withdraw their petition, promising at the same time that inquiry should be made into their grievances. A fortnight was allowed to elapse, during which time further unsuccessful efforts were made in the same direction. In the meanwhile, the Colonels had learnt that their petition was viewed with disfavour by the Khedive and his Turkish surroundings. Riaz Pasha received a hint from the palace that the dilatory manner in which he was treating the question was calculated to throw some doubts on his loyalty. He determined, therefore, to provoke an immediate decision. The matter was discussed at a meeting of the Council of Ministers held under the presidency of the Khedive on January 30, from which Sir Auckland Colvin and M. de Blignières were most unwisely excluded. All idea of compromise was rejected. It was resolved to arrest the Colonels, and to try them by Court-martial. Subsequently, an inquiry would be made into their grievances. An order was drawn up and countersigned by the Khedive, summoning the Colonels to the Ministry of War on February 1.

One peculiarity of Egyptian official life is that no secrets are ever kept. The Colonels were immediately informed of the decision at which the Council of Ministers had arrived. Everything was, therefore, arranged for the action which followed. It was settled that, in the event of the

Colonels not returning in two hours, the officers and men of their regiments should go to the Ministry of War and deliver them if they were under arrest. At the same time, a message was sent to Toura, about ten miles distant from Cairo, with a view to securing concerted action on the part of the regiment quartered there. This programme was faithfully executed. The Colonels were summoned to the Ministry of War on the pretext that certain arrangements had to be made for a procession which was to accompany one of the princesses on the occasion of her marriage. They obeyed the summons. On their arrival at the Ministry of War, they were arrested and placed on their trial. Whilst the trial was proceeding, the officers and men of their regiments arrived, and broke into the room where the Court was sitting. They treated the Minister of War roughly, destroyed the furniture, and delivered the Colonels, who then marched with their troops to the Khedive's palace, and demanded the dismissal of the Minister of War. The Ministers and other high functionaries soon gathered round the Khedive. Some counselled resistance, but the practical difficulty presented itself that no force was available with which to resist. The only sign of fidelity given by any of the troops belonging to the Cairo garrison was that the regiment quartered at Abbassieh, two miles distant from the town, refused to join the mutineers, but the most their Turkish officers could do was to keep them where they were. They would not have defended the Khedive against the mutinous regiments. The regiment stationed at Toura marched to Cairo, according to previous arrangement, and insisted on continuing its march, although messengers were sent to dissuade the men from advancing after the obnoxious Minister had been dismissed.

Under these circumstances, resistance was impossible. After some hesitation, the Khedive sent for the Colonels and informed them that Osman Pasha Rifki was dismissed and Mahmoud Pasha Baroudi[1] named Minister of War in his place. This announcement was received with cheers. The troops dispersed and tranquillity was for the time being restored. The mutinous Colonels were allowed to remain in command of their regiments. They waited on the Khedive, asked his pardon for their past misconduct, and gave assurances of unalterable fidelity and loyalty to his person.

This was the second mutiny of the Egyptian Army. It had followed the same course as the first. It originated with legitimate grievances to which no attention was paid. The next stage was mutiny. The final result was complete submission to the will of the mutineers. The whole affair was mismanaged, and for this mismanagement the Khedive appears to have been largely responsible. Two courses were from the first open to the Khedive. Either he should have endeavoured to rally to his side a sufficient force to crush the mutineers, or, if that was impossible, he should have made terms with the officers before discontent developed into mutiny. Unfortunately, he adopted neither of these courses. The attempt to decoy the Colonels away from their troops and to punish them without any trustworthy force behind him to ensure effect being given to the decisions of the Court-martial, was probably the most unwise course which could have been adopted. Sir Edward Malet expressed his opinion that the officers were treated "in the way best calculated to destroy all confidence in the Khedive and his Government, although it was in harmony with the traditions of Oriental statesmanship."

---

[1] Baroudi was the family name. He was also frequently called Mahmoud Pasha Sami.

The Egyptian officers and soldiers now learnt for the second time that they had only to assert themselves in order to obtain all they required. With this encouragement, they would not be slow to mutiny a third time, should the necessity for doing so arise.

For the moment, however, a truce was established between the Khedive and his mutinous officers; but suspicions and fears were rife on both sides. The Khedive and his Ministers were afraid to disband the disaffected regiments, or even to remove them from Cairo. The officers, on the other hand, although their victory had been complete, were fearful of the consequences of their own action. They mistrusted the Khedive and thought that, should an opportunity occur, the reluctant pardon which they had received would be cancelled, and that they would be visited with condign punishment. They felt even greater resentment against Riaz Pasha than against the Khedive, and began a series of intrigues with a view to bringing about a change of Ministry.

These intrigues were encouraged by Baron de Ring, the French Consul-General, who had frequent interviews with the mutinous Colonels. The action of Baron de Ring increased the difficulties of the situation. If, in addition to financial embarrassments, defective administration, and a mutinous army, there was to be superadded hostile intrigue on the part of the representative of the French Government, the position of the Egyptian Ministry would clearly become untenable. Riaz Pasha wished to resign, but was dissuaded from doing so. The Khedive eventually wrote to the President of the French Republic to complain of Baron de Ring's conduct. The result was that he was recalled. He left Egypt on February 28. The Khedive then summoned the principal officers of the army to the palace, and expressed the confidence he entertained in Riaz Pasha, of whom he spoke in eulogistic terms. Already the pay of the unemployed Egyptian officers had been increased, and a public declaration had been made by the Khedive to the effect that for the future every class of officer, whether Turk, Circassian, or Egyptian, would be treated on the same footing. These measures somewhat improved the position of the Ministry. When Sir Edward Malet left in May on a short leave, he "had reason to believe that confidence was being restored; that the officers had, in fact, nothing to fear from intrigue; that they were gradually relaxing measures for their own protection, and beginning to feel that the Khedive and the Ministers no longer aimed at their lives."

It is unnecessary to give the detailed history of the next few months. The officers still entertained a deep-rooted mistrust of the intentions of the Khedive and his Ministers. "The traditions of the days of Ismail Pasha," Sir Edward Malet wrote, "stalked like spectres across their paths." They thought that their lives were in danger. Insubordination increased daily. A Commission was appointed to inquire into the grievances of the army. Arábi Bey was one of its members. His language to the Minister of War was very disrespectful. In the month of July, an artilleryman was run over by a cart and killed in the streets of Alexandria. His comrades bore his dead body to the palace, and forced an entrance in defiance of the orders of their officers. They were tried and the ringleaders condemned to punishment. About the same time, nineteen officers brought charges against their Colonel (Abdul-Al). These charges formed the subject of inquiry. They were found to be groundless. The officers were in consequence dismissed from the active list of the army, but were shortly afterwards restored to their former positions by the Khedive. The Colonels were greatly offended. They believed that the Khedive's action had been taken with the intention of encouraging the insubordination of their junior officers towards them. About the same time, Mahmoud Pasha Baroudi, the Minister of War, who sympathised with the officers concerned in the mutiny of February 1, was dismissed, and the Khedive's brother-in-law, Daoud Pasha, was appointed in his place. This measure also caused great dissatisfaction.

Within the Ministerial circle, a good deal of dissension reigned. The relations between Riaz Pasha and M. de Blignières became strained. The Khedive's confidence in Riaz Pasha was impaired. It was whispered that His Highness favoured the return to power of Chérif Pasha.

It was clear that another crisis was not far off, but at the moment it was about to occur, the Government were hopeful that their main difficulties had been overcome. "At no period," Sir Edward Malet wrote, "since February 1 had the confidence of the Khedive and his Government been so complete as immediately before the outbreak of September 9. On the very eve, and on the morning itself of that day, Riaz Pasha assured those with whom he conversed that the Government were masters of the situation, and that the danger of a military movement had passed away. But, in fact, all the terrors of the Colonels for their personal safety had been again aroused. A story had got abroad that the Khedive had obtained a secret Fetwa, or decree from the Sheikh-ul-Islam, condemning them to death for high treason. There was absolutely no foundation for this story, but it is currently believed, and at this moment the position of the Sheikh-ul-Islam is precarious in consequence of it. Spies were continually hovering about the residences of the Colonels, and on the night of the 8th September a man presented himself at the house of Arábi Bey, was refused admittance, and was afterwards followed and seen to return to the Prefecture of Police. There was no doubt in the mind of Arábi Bey that he was to be murdered; he left his house and went to that of the other Colonels, to whom a similar incident had just occurred. It is my belief that then only were measures taken for immediate action, that it was concerted and planned that night, as it was executed on the following day."

On September 9, the 3rd Regiment of Infantry, which was stationed at Cairo, was ordered to Alexandria. This order produced a mutiny. Arábi Bey, with 2500 men and 18 guns, marched to the square in front of the Abdin Palace. The Khedive was at the Ismailia Palace, distant about a quarter of a mile from Abdin. He did the wisest thing possible under the circumstances. He sent for Sir Auckland Colvin.

Sir Auckland Colvin was a member of the Indian Civil Service. In the hour of trial he did not belie the proud motto, *Mens aequa in arduis*, inscribed under the picture of Warren Hastings which hangs in the Calcutta Council Chamber. It is one which might fitly apply to the whole of that splendid body of Englishmen who compose the Indian Civil Service. The spirit of the Englishman rose high in the presence of danger. It was not the first time he had heard of mutiny. He knew how his own countrymen had met dangers of this sort. The example of Lawrence and Outram, of Nicholson and Edwards, pointed the way to the

Indian Civilian. His duty was clear. He must endeavour at the risk of his own life to impart to the Khedive some portion of the spirit which animated his own imperial race. He spoke in no uncertain terms. "The Viceroy," he subsequently wrote, "asked my opinion on what should be done. I advised him to take the initiative. Two regiments in Cairo were said by Riaz Pasha to be faithful. I advised him to summon them to the Abdin Square, with all the military police available, to put himself at their head, and, when Arábi Bey arrived, personally to arrest him. He replied that Arábi Bey had with him the artillery and cavalry, and that they might fire. I said that they would not dare to, and that if he had the courage to take the initiative, and to expose himself personally, he might succeed in overcoming the mutineers. Otherwise, he was lost. Stone Pasha[1] warmly supported me. . . . While his carriage was coming Sir Charles Cookson[2] arrived, expressed to the Viceroy his concurrence in my views, and returned to the Agency to telegraph to his Government."

What followed may best be told in Sir Auckland Colvin's words. "I accompanied the Viceroy," he wrote, "in a separate carriage; the Ministers also, and some five or six native officers of rank, with Stone Pasha. We went first to the Abdin barracks, where the regiment of the guard turned out, and with the warmest protestations swore loyalty. Thence we drove to the Citadel, where the same occurred; but we learnt that this regiment, previous to our arrival, had been signalling to the regiment (Arábi Bey's) in the Abbassieh barrack. The Viceroy then announced his intention of going to the Abbassieh barrack. It was already 3.30; I urged him to return to the Abdin Square taking with him the Citadel Regiment, and when he arrived at the square to put himself at the head of that regiment, the regiment of the guard and the military police. He drove off, however, to Abbassieh. It was a long drive, and when we got there about 4 (the Ministers having left us at the Citadel and returned direct) we found Arábi Bey had marched with the regiment to Cairo. We followed, and on entering the town the Viceroy took a long *détour*, and arrived at the Abdin Palace by a side door. I jumped out of my carriage, and urged him on no account to remain in the palace, but to come into the square. He agreed at once, and we went together, followed at a considerable distance by four or five of his native officers, Stone Pasha, and one or two other European officers. The square was entirely occupied by soldiers drawn up round it, and keeping all spectators at a distance. The Viceroy advanced firmly into the square towards a little group of officers and men (some mounted) in the centre. I said to him, 'When Arábi Bey presents himself, tell him to give you his sword, and to give them the order to disperse. Then go the round of the square and address each regiment separately, and give them the order to disperse.' Arábi Bey approached on horseback; the Viceroy called out to him to dismount. He did so, and came forward on foot, with several others and a guard with fixed bayonets, and saluted. I said to the Viceroy, 'Now is your moment.' He replied, 'We are between four fires.' I said, 'Have courage.' He took counsel of a native officer on his left, and repeated to me: 'What can I do? We are between four fires. We shall be killed.' He then told Arábi Bey to sheathe his sword. The order was obeyed; and he then asked Arábi Bey what all this meant; Arábi Bey replied by enumerating three points, adding that the army had come there on the part of the Egyptian people to enforce them, and would not retire till they were conceded. The Viceroy turned to me and said, 'You hear what he says.' I replied that it was not fitting for the Viceroy to discuss questions of this kind with Colonels, and suggested to him to retire into the Palace of Abdin, leaving me to speak to the Colonels. He did so, and I remained for about an hour till the arrival of Sir Charles Cookson, explaining to them the gravity of the situation for themselves, and urging them to retire the troops while there was yet time."

---

[1] An American officer in the Egyptian army.

[2] Sir Charles Cookson was acting as Consul-General during the temporary absence of Sir Edward Malet.

The three points to which Sir Auckland Colvin alluded as constituting the demands of Arábi were: (1) that all the Ministers should be dismissed; (2) that a Parliament should be convoked; and, (3), that the strength of the army should be raised to 18,000 men.

Sir Charles Cookson then entered into negotiations with the mutineers. The Khedive consented to dismiss his Ministers on the understanding that the other points demanded by the officers should be left in suspense until reference could be made to the Porte. Arábi agreed to these terms. The question then arose of who should be President of the Council. One or two names were put forward by the Khedive, and rejected by Arábi and his followers. The Khedive then intimated that he would be prepared to nominate Chérif Pasha. This announcement "was received with loud and universal shouts of 'Long live the Khedive!' . . . Arábi Bey then asked to be allowed to see the Khedive and make his submission. This favour was granted to him and the other Colonels, and then the troops were drawn off in perfect quietness to their respective barracks."

Some difficulty was encountered in inducing

Chérif Pasha to accept office. He objected to becoming Prime Minister as the nominee of a mutinous army. Sir Charles Cookson, M. Sienkiewicz (the French Consul-General), and Sir Auckland Colvin endeavoured to overcome this reluctance, which was in no degree feigned. They so far succeeded that Chérif Pasha consented to enter into negotiations with the leaders of the military movement. At first, there appeared but little prospect of an arrangement. Chérif Pasha asked that, on condition of his undertaking the government, and guaranteeing the personal safety of the leaders of the movement, the mutinous regiments should withdraw to the posts assigned to them. The more violent amongst the officers had, however, got the upper hand. They did not fear Turkish intervention, the probability of which now began to be discussed. Indeed, there was some reason to suppose that the mutineers had received encouragement from Constantinople. Chérif Pasha's terms were rejected, and he declared that he would not undertake to form a Ministry.

Under these circumstances, the Khedive intimated that he was "ready to yield everything in order to save public security." Suddenly, however, on September 13, things took a turn for the better. The relief came from an unexpected quarter. Arábi had summoned to Cairo the members of the Chamber of Notables. When they arrived, "they proved more capable of appreciating the true situation than their military allies. Informed of the negotiations going on with Chérif Pasha, they in a body went to him, and entreated him to agree to form a Ministry, offering him their personal guarantee that, if he consented, the army should engage to absolute submission to his orders. The military leaders seem to have been more struck by this conduct than by all the previous representations made to them." Seeing that public opinion was not altogether with them, Arábi and his followers modified their tone. They tendered their "absolute submission to the authority of Chérif Pasha as the Khedive's Minister." They only made two conditions. One was that Mahmoud Pasha Sami should be reinstated in office. The second was that the Military Law recommended by the Commission, which had been recently sitting, should be put into immediate execution. "To both of these demands," Sir Charles Cookson wrote, "Chérif Pasha, most reluctantly, was compelled to yield, but as to the latter, he expressly reserved to himself the liberty of omitting the most important article, which proposed to raise the army to 18,000 men."

This incident was significant. It showed that there were two parties in opposition to the Khedive. These were, first, a mutinous army half-mad with fear of punishment, and secondly, a party, the offspring of Ismail Pasha's dalliance with constitutionalism, who had some vague national aspirations, and who, as representing the civil elements of society, shunned the idea of absolute military government. Under statesmanlike guidance, this tendency to separation between the two parties might perhaps have been turned to account. The main thing was to prevent amalgamation. If the national party were once made to believe that the only hope of realising its aspirations lay in seeking the aid of the soldiers, not only would the authority of the Khedive disappear altogether, but all hope of establishing a régime under which the army would be subordinate to the civil Government would have to be abandoned.

One of the many political apophthegms attributed to Prince Bismarck is the following:

"La politique est l'art de s'accommoder aux circonstances et de tirer parti de tout, même de ce qui déplaît." It would have been wise for the Khedive at this moment to have acted on the principle set forth in this maxim. The military party and the national party were alike distasteful to him. The interests both of his dynasty and of his country pointed, however, to the necessity of conciliating the latter in order to keep in check the former of these two parties. Unfortunately, the Khedive did not possess sufficient political insight to grasp whatever opportunities the situation offered to him.

The new Ministry was nominated on September 14. Chérif Pasha was assured of the support of the British and French Governments. At his own request, he was further assured that "in case the army should show itself submissive and obedient, the Governments of England and France would interpose their good offices with the Sublime Porte in order to avert from Egypt an occupation by an Ottoman army." The usual exchange of letters took place between the Khedive and his Prime Minister setting forth the principles which were to guide the new Ministry. These letters contained only one remark which is noteworthy. Chérif Pasha was no friend to European interference in Egypt. But he had learnt that it might be productive of some good. His letter to the Khedive, therefore, contained the following passage: "The institution of the Control, at first criticised from different points of view, has greatly assisted towards the re-establishment of the finances, at the same time that it has been a real support for the Government of Your Highness. In this twofold capacity, it is important to maintain it as instituted by the Decree of November 15, 1879." To this, the Khedive replied as follows: "A perfect understanding between the Control and my Government is necessary; it must be maintained and strengthened."

The new Ministry, therefore, began work with such props from without as were possible under the circumstances. But for all that, it was clear that the real masters of the situation were the leaders of the mutinous army. Arábi had already treated on equal terms with the representatives of the Powers. He had issued a Circular on September 9 signed "Colonel Ahmed Arábi, representing the Egyptian army," in which he assured the Consuls-General that he and those acting in concert with him "would continue to protect the interests of all the subjects of friendly Powers." There could be no mistaking this language. It was that of a ruler who disposed of power to assert his will, and who intended to use his power with that object.

Yet, whilst Arábi was heading a mutiny against his Sovereign, and employing language which could only lawfully proceed from the Khedive or from one of his Ministers, there can be little doubt that his conduct was mainly guided by fear of the Khedive's resentment and vengeance. Sir Charles Cookson thought that the officers had "exclusively regarded their own safety and interest throughout the agitation." Sir Edward Malet entertained a similar opinion. Every word and deed of the mutineers showed, indeed, that fear was the predominating influence at work amongst them. In the Circular which Arábi addressed to the representatives of the Powers, he said: "Since the Khedive's return to Cairo, intrigues have been on the increase, while we have been threatened both openly and secretly; and they have culminated in an attempt to create disunion among the military, in order to facilitate the object in view, namely, to destroy and avenge themselves upon us. In this state of things, we consider it our duty to protect our lives and interests." Sir Edward Malet was informed by "a Musulman gentleman, who had had long and frequent conversations" with Arábi, that the latter thought that action had become absolutely necessary in self-defence. At a later period, Arábi said that he believed that a party of Circassians agreed together to kill him, as well as every native Egyptian holding a high appointment, on October 1, 1881. "We heard," he said, "that three iron boxes had been prepared into which to put us, so that we might be dropped into the Nile."[1] Men in this frame of mind would probably not, at an early stage of the proceedings, have been uncontrollable. But, in order to control them, one condition was essential. They might have been treated with severity, or, if that was impossible or undesirable, with leniency, but in either case it was essential that they should be treated in a manner which would leave no doubt in their minds as to the good faith of their rulers. Moreover, the practices which until a recent period had existed in Egypt, notably the fate of Ismail Pasha's Finance Minister,[2] the naturally suspicious character of Orientals, and their belief, which is often well founded, that some intrigue lies at the bottom of every action of the Government, should have rendered it clear to the Khedive that the slightest whisper imputing bad faith would be fatal to his reputation for loyalty. The utmost caution was, in fact, necessary. A bold, straightforward conduct, and a stern repression of all palace intrigues, might perhaps have quieted the fears of the officers. Riaz Pasha, although he may not have grasped the whole situation, had sufficiently statesmanlike instincts to appreciate the true nature of the danger. He warned the Khedive frequently not to do or say anything which could give rise to the least suspicion as to his intentions. It is improbable that the Khedive had any deliberate plan for wreaking vengeance on the mutineers. It is certain that his humane nature would have revolted at any idea of assassination, such as was attributed to him. At the same time, if he had considered himself sufficiently powerful to act, he would not improbably have made his displeasure felt in one form or another, in spite of the pardon which had been reluctantly wrung from him. Like Macbeth, he would not play false, but yet would wrongly win. It would be in harmony with the inconsistency even of an honest Oriental to pardon fully, and at the same time to make a mental reserve, which would enable him at some future time to act as though the pardon had only been partial. He allowed his surroundings, which almost always exercise a baneful influence in an Oriental court, to intrigue and to talk in a manner which was calculated to excite the fears and suspicions of the mutineers. Arábi, in his Circular to the Consuls-General, made special allusion to the intrigues of Yousuf Pasha Kemal, the Khedive's agent, and Ibrahim Aga, the Khedive's Tutunji (Pipe-bearer), who, he said, "had been sowing discord." National proclivities and foreign intrigue may, therefore, have had something to do with the mutiny of September 9, but there can be little doubt that the main cause was truly stated by Arábi. It was fear.

---

[1] "Instructions to my Counsel," *Nineteenth Century,* December 1882.

[2] *Vide ante,* p. 26.

This was the third mutiny of the Egyptian army. On each occasion, the mutineers gained confidence in their strength. On each occasion, the submission of the Government was more complete than previously. The first mutiny was quelled by the sacrifice of an unpopular Minister (Nubar Pasha), whom the ruling Khedive did not wish to maintain in office. On the second occasion, the War Minister (Osman Pasha Rifki) was offered up to appease the mutineers. On the third occasion, the mutineers dictated their own terms at the point of the bayonet; they did not rest satisfied without a complete change of Ministry. "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill." No remnant of military discipline was now left. The Khedive was shorn of all real authority. The smallest incident would suffice to show that the Ministers only held office on sufferance from the mutineers. No long time was to elapse before such an incident occurred.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE CHÉRIF MINISTRY

September–December 1881

The Porte wishes to interfere—Objections of France and England—Despatch of Turkish Commissioners to Cairo—Effect of their mission—British and French ships sent to Alexandria—Arábi leaves Cairo with his regiment—Remarks on Turkish interference—Divergent views of France and England—Despondency of the Khedive—Chérif Pasha's policy—Sir Auckland Colvin's views—Arábi's policy—Insubordination in the army—Violence of the local press—Attitude of the civil population—Summary of the situation at the end of 1881.

One of the first results of the events related in the last chapter was to stimulate the ambition of the Sultan, who saw, in the confusion with which Egypt was threatened, another opportunity for reasserting Turkish supremacy over the country.

There was, indeed, a good deal to cause anxiety to a ruler whose own tenure of power was so far precarious in that it was, and still is mainly based on the jealousies of the different heirs to his succession. Arábi had sent a petition to Constantinople stating that Egypt was falling into the hands of foreigners and being Christianised, and that, unless the Sultan intervened, the country would soon share the fate of Tunis. From the Sultan's point of view, it was not desirable to discourage Arábi too much, and accordingly some slight encouragement was given to him. But, whilst running with the hare, it was also necessary to hunt with the hounds. Heterodox political views were in the air. There was some vague talk of an Egyptian constitution. Now, the Sultan objected strongly to the introduction of constitutional government into any part of the Ottoman dominions. Then, again, there had been whispers of a secret movement which was on foot with a view to the establishment of an Arab kingdom in Egypt and Syria. If this were done, what would become of the homogeneity of the Ottoman Empire, and, indeed, of the House of Osman itself? From the days when Sobieski repulsed the Turks from the walls of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire had been steadily declining. One province after another had been torn from its flank. For the moment, the onward march of European civilisation took no very militant form; but it was probable that the combat, which had been going on for a couple of centuries or more, would sooner or later be renewed, and, if it were renewed, it might well be that, although the Christian Powers might quarrel over the heritage, the fate of the rightful heir would be sealed. The House of Osman might have to abandon its European possessions. In that case, the only refuge left would be to establish the Khalifate somewhere on the other side of the Bosphorus, notably at Baghdad, which, according to ancient tradition, was to be the Dar-el-Selam (the House of Peace) of the dynasty of Osman. The establishment of an Arab kingdom, more especially if it was to be encumbered with newfangled ideas of constitutions and the like, would materially interfere with the execution of a policy of this sort. Any such proposal was, therefore, to be resisted as strongly as possible.

The first idea of the Sultan was to occupy the country with Turkish troops. Early in September 1881, preparations were made to transport an

Ottoman force to Egypt. The French Government, however, true to their traditional policy, entertained strong objections to any Turkish interference in Egypt. The British Government were also of opinion that "it would not be desirable that any active measures of repression should be taken by the Sultan until, at all events, the necessity for them had been clearly demonstrated, and the method to be adopted had been discussed and agreed upon. But they saw no objection to the Sultan, if His Majesty should be so disposed, sending, with the consent of England and France, a Turkish General to Egypt to support the Khedive's authority, and aid His Highness with his advice."

The French Government, however, thought that "even the despatch of a Turkish General to Egypt might lead to further steps, resulting, perhaps, in a permanent occupation of the country by Turkish troops." The British Government yielded to the French representations on this subject, and on September 18, Lord Dufferin, who was at the time Ambassador at Constantinople, was instructed, in the event of the Sultan proposing to send a Turkish General to Cairo, "to endeavour to dissuade His Majesty from adopting this course." The French Ambassador at Constantinople had already received instructions "to protest against any sort of intervention on the part of Turkey in Egyptian affairs."

If, however, Turkish troops could not be sent to Egypt; if the deposition of Tewfik Pasha in favour of Halim Pasha, which was also contemplated, was impossible by reason of British opposition; if, moreover, the idea of despatching a Turkish General to Egypt had to be abandoned, at all events a sort of shadowy supremacy would be asserted if a Turkish official were sent in some kind of capacity to Egypt, even although neither the envoy nor the Sultan had any very clear idea of what functions he would perform on arrival. The Sultan, therefore, informed the French Ambassador "that he considered, in view of Turkey's enormous interests both in Egypt and the Hedjaz, that he had a perfect right to despatch an emissary with his compliments and advice to the Khedive, and this he intended to do, though the person would not have the character of a Commissioner." Ali Fuad Bey and Ali Nizami Pasha were, therefore, sent to Egypt, and arrived at Alexandria on October 6.

The effect of the despatch of these envoys was instantaneous on all the parties concerned. Every one recognised that the Sultan had some sort of technical right to interfere. Some recognised that, in an extreme case, his interference would be the least of many evils. Others were anxious to play with Turkish suzerain rights in order to subserve their own interests. But there was one point on which Lord Granville,[1] M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire, Chérif Pasha, Arábi, the Egyptian military party, the Egyptian national party, the bondholding interest, and the public opinion of Europe, appeared to be agreed. It was that Turkish interference in Egypt would do a great deal of harm, and was to be avoided if possible.

The British and French Governments informed the Sultan that they had "learnt with surprise and regret" of the decision to send envoys. Sir Edward Malet and M. Sienkiewicz were instructed "to receive the Turkish envoys with all the honours due to their rank, but to firmly oppose any interference on their part in the internal administration of Egypt." Moreover, both the British and French Governments suddenly found out that, "with a view to diminishing the danger of a panic amongst the foreign population in Cairo and Alexandria, which the absence of a place of refuge might occasion amongst them in the event of disturbances," it would be desirable to send a couple of ships to Alexandria, a measure which gave considerable umbrage at Constantinople. It was calculated, the Sultan thought, "to cause agitation and disturbance among the whole Arab population, and it was not improbable that it might lead to a general revolution."

---

[1] Lord Granville assumed charge of the Foreign Office on April 28, 1880.

To the Khedive, the intelligence that two Turkish envoys were to come to Cairo was "altogether unexpected," and he asked Sir Edward Malet and M. Sienkiewicz whether they "could throw any light upon it"; to which question, Sir Edward Malet reported, "we replied in the negative." As regards Chérif Pasha, he was of opinion that, as two Turkish envoys were to come, the main thing was to get rid of them as soon as possible. Accordingly, at the request of the Egyptian Government, the British and French Ambassadors at Constantinople were instructed to "urge upon the Porte that they should shorten as much as possible the stay of the Turkish envoys in Egypt."

A considerable effect was also produced on Arábi. He was willing enough to strengthen his own cause against Circassians and Europeans by an appeal to the Sultan, but he never intended that the appeal should be taken seriously. There was, indeed, something strangely inconsistent, not to say comical, in asking the Sultan to countenance a movement which was avowedly directed against Turkish supremacy in Egypt. Arábi, therefore, made no further difficulties about moving his mutinous regiment from Cairo to Suez. "He had always said," Sir Edward Malet reported, "that he was ready to go, but no date had been fixed for his departure, and he himself had spoken about leaving perhaps in three weeks, but I have little doubt that there would have been considerable difficulty in inducing him to fix a day had it not been for the unexpected announcement of the advent of the envoys."

Under all these circumstances, it was clear that the Turkish mission could not be productive of much practical result. As a matter of fact, all that the Turkish envoys did was to inspect the troops at Cairo. After the inspection, Ali Nizami Pasha harangued the officers. He reminded them that the Khedive was the representative of the Sultan, and that therefore disobedience to the Khedive was disobedience to the Sultan. After that, nothing more was done. The pressure exerted from all sides on the Turkish envoys with a view to getting them out of the country was too great to be resisted. The question, however, arose as to which were to leave first, the British and French ships, or the Turkish envoys. Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador in London, told Lord Granville "that it would be impossible for the Sultan to withdraw his mission until after the departure of the ships." Lord Granville, on the other hand, said that the ships had already left Malta for Alexandria, but would not arrive till October 19, "by which time it was to be presumed that the Turkish Commissioners would be taking their departure." Lord Dufferin was instructed to tell the Sultan that the ships would leave on the same day that the Turkish Commissioners embarked. M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire also told Lord Lyons that when once the Turkish envoys had gone, both ships might quit Alexandria without delay, and simultaneously. Both Governments were of opinion that, after the departure of the envoys, there was no longer any necessity to provide a place of refuge for Europeans in the event of disturbance. The result of all this diplomatic skirmishing was that H.M.S. *Invincible* arrived at Alexandria on October 19. Twenty-four hours before her arrival, the Turkish envoys had left Cairo for Alexandria with a view to embarkation at that port, and twenty-four hours after her arrival both the British and French ships left Alexandria harbour.

This episode has been narrated at some length, because an important principle was involved in the discussion connected with the mission of the Turkish envoys. Who, as a last resort, was to be responsible for the maintenance of order in Egypt?

It is a most unfortunate thing that at no stage of the Egyptian Question has it been possible to make any suggestion against which valid objections might not be urged. Turkish intervention in Egypt was open to obvious objections; but could any alternative and less objectionable policy be suggested? The British Government thought not; they, therefore, from the first leant towards the idea that, as a last resort, the Sultan should be used as the *Deus ex machina*, who should restore order. They were, however, so hampered by their partnership with the French as to be unable to give effect to their own views.

Both the British and French Governments were honestly desirous of acting together. M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire said that "his policy with reference to Egypt was well known, and never varied; it was summed up in the absolute necessity, as in the past, so in the future, of perfect frankness between the two Governments, and joint action on every occasion." There cannot be the least doubt that these words honestly represented the views of the French Government at this time, and that the desire to co-operate was as honestly reciprocated by the British Government. Unfortunately, the views of the British and French Governments were divergent on one important point of principle. The French Government regarded Turkish intervention in Egypt as the worst possible solution of the Egyptian Question. M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire told the British Chargé d'Affaires that he would prefer an Anglo-French to a Turkish occupation of Egypt. Moreover, the French Government feared that, if Turkish intervention were allowed, the pretensions of the Sultan would be raised and his prestige increased amongst the Mohammedan population of Northern Africa. Thus, a spirit of fanaticism might be aroused in Tunis.

The objections of the British Government to Turkish intervention, on the other hand, were far less strong than those of the French. This was evidenced by their willingness to allow the Sultan to send a Turkish General to Egypt, although, at the instance of the French Government, they ultimately withdrew their support to this measure. If any armed occupation became necessary, the British Government preferred that it should be Turkish rather than Anglo-French. But they allowed French diplomacy to take the lead, and the main end of French diplomacy was to prevent any Turkish interference in Egypt.

When the Egyptian Question was subsequently (July 24, 1882) discussed in Parliament, Lord Salisbury said: "There were two modes of going to work with the Government of Egypt. You might have used moral force as you have made use of material force.[1] Your only mode of acting by moral force is by means of the hearty co-operation of the Sultan of Turkey. But you took the best means of alienating that hearty co-operation. If you had gone to him from the first, taken him into your counsels, and made him the instrument of what you desired, and indicated from the first that you wished to take no steps without his concurrence and co-operation, there might have been objections to such a plan; but, at least, you would have had him heartily with you." Lord Salisbury then indicated various steps which had been taken, and which, in his opinion, must "in themselves have resulted in setting any Sultan of Turkey in opposition."

---

[1] This was in allusion to the bombardment of Alexandria, which, when Lord Salisbury spoke, had recently taken place.

There was much force in Lord Salisbury's criticism. In October 1881, the necessity for armed foreign intervention of any kind had not yet arisen. Lord Granville was, without doubt, acting wisely in deprecating measures of repression on the part of the Sultan until their necessity had been clearly demonstrated. On the other hand, it was apparent that Egypt was threatened with a degree of confusion against which moral force, persuasion, or even threats would be employed in vain. It was, therefore, necessary at the outset to have a clear idea as to the method by which physical force was to be employed in case of need. There were but two alternative courses possible. One was an Anglo-French occupation, for at that time no one thought of an occupation by France or by England alone. The other was a Turkish occupation. The French preferred an Anglo-French occupation as the lesser evil of the two. Their views were perfectly logical and consistent, and, for a time at all events, the French Government acted upon them. Whether the policy they advocated was the best in the true interests of France or England is a matter of opinion.

The British Government, on the other hand, contemplated the possibility of a Turkish occupation, and preferred this solution to any other. In a despatch addressed to Sir Edward Malet on November 4, 1881, Lord Granville laid down the general lines of British policy in connection with Egyptian affairs. He deprecated the idea that either the French or the British Government entertained any "self-aggrandising designs" as regards Egypt. "The Khedive and his Ministers," he added, "may feel secure that Her Majesty's Government contemplate no such deviation from the policy which they have traced for themselves." He set forth the British view of the Turkish connection with Egypt. It was that the *status quo* should be maintained. The tie with Turkey should not be severed. At the same time, Lord Granville pointed out that the British Government "desired to maintain Egypt in the enjoyment of the measure of administrative independence which has been secured to her by the Sultan's Firmans. The Government of England would run counter to the most cherished traditions of national history were it to entertain a desire to diminish that liberty or tamper with the institutions to which it has given birth." Lord Granville then went on to say that "the only circumstance which would force Her Majesty's Government to depart from the course of conduct which he had mentioned would be the occurrence in Egypt of a state of anarchy." These were wise words. They indicated that Turkish intervention was undesirable, but that, if material force had to be employed, a Turkish was to be preferred to an Anglo-French occupation.

Unfortunately, while the British Government contemplated using the Turk, with all his obvious defects, as the instrument by which order was as a last resort to be maintained in Egypt, they allowed themselves to be led away by the objections which could be urged against Turkish intervention considered exclusively on its own merits. They followed the French Government in a line of conduct which irritated and discouraged the Sultan. As the Sultan's military forces might eventually have to be used for the preservation of order, it would have been wise to have encouraged the exercise of his authority by viewing with a friendly eye the despatch of a Turkish mission to Egypt, in spite of the objections urged from Cairo in deprecation of the mission. But this was not done. The Sultan was discouraged and opposed in the exercise of his authority. The British Government thus entered a groove hostile to Turkish intervention, with the result that British intervention became eventually a necessity.

It is, of course, true that this subject presents another aspect. So far as the welfare of the Egyptian people and of all Europeans interested in the affairs of Egypt is concerned, European intervention, whether British, French, or Anglo-French, was to be preferred to Turkish intervention. But, on the assumption that it was desirable to avoid the occupation of Egypt by British or French troops, it would appear that Turkish intervention, in spite of its acknowledged drawbacks, should, from the first, have been less totally discouraged.

It is curious, in reading over the correspondence after a lapse of many years, to observe how heartily the French Government worked to bring about the solution which eventually occurred, and which was probably more distasteful to them than any other, namely, a British occupation of Egypt. The British Government, on the other hand, acted throughout on the principle of *Video meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*. They saw the objections to any European occupation. They preferred a Turkish occupation. Yet, although they appear to have shown greater political foresight than the

French, they failed to act in a manner which would have enabled effect to be given to their own principles. The more unreasonable amongst the French eventually said that England, with her habitual perfidy, was merely playing a part with a view ultimately to bring about a British occupation. They were quite wrong. The British Government acted, as they always act, with perfect honesty, but, at the same time, with so little consistency in the pursuit of political aims, that it can be no matter for surprise that their motives should have been subsequently misrepresented. Their vacillation was, without doubt, due to a desire to ensure French co-operation, and also probably in part to an excessive deference to English public opinion. The idea of handing over Egypt, even temporarily, to the rule of the Sultan would unquestionably have met with much hostile criticism in England, probably from the same classes who were eventually most strongly opposed to a British occupation. But it can scarcely be held that this argument constituted a sufficient plea for discarding the policy. No one would have been able to propose any alternative policy which would have been preferable. The duty of a Government is to take the lead, especially as regards foreign affairs, and to stand criticism even, when matters of the first importance are concerned, at the risk of bringing about its own downfall.

Shortly after the mutiny of September 9, Sir Edward Malet reported that the "general tone of the Khedive with regard to the future was despondent. His Highness said that he could no longer believe in any professions of fidelity made by the officers of the army." These observations gave the keynote to the Khedive's conduct during the next few months. He resented the humiliation to which he had been subjected by the mutinous conduct of his officers. It rankled in his mind, and led him to nurture schemes for revenge. He constantly expressed his opinion that there could be no tranquillity in the country until the army was mastered. It can be no matter for surprise that the Khedive entertained views of this description, but it would have been wiser and more statesmanlike if he had sunk all personal feelings of resentment against the army. As it was, the breach between the Khedive on the one hand, and the army and the national party on the other hand, continued to widen every day.

Chérif Pasha took a broader view of the situation. He appreciated the desirability of separating the national party from the army. He told Sir Edward Malet on September 21 "that it was his intention later on to convoke the Chamber of Notables, which he hoped would by degrees become the legitimate exponent of the internal wants of the country, and by this means deprive the army of the character which it had arrogated to itself in the late movement. . . . The Notables would be a representative body on which the Khedive and his Government would be able to lean for popular support against military dictation." On October 8, a Decree was issued convoking the Chamber of Notables for December 23. The functions and composition of the Chamber were regulated by Ismail Pasha's law of 1866. Arábi pressed for the adoption of a law giving greater power to the Chamber, but eventually yielded. Sir Edward Malet reported on October 2 that Arábi once more "professed confidence in Chérif Pasha, and stated his intention of leaving the matter entirely in his hands."

The situation at this time was well described in a Memorandum written by Sir Auckland Colvin on September 19. "As to the position," he said, "my view of it is that it is essentially an armistice. The arrangement we have been able to come to gives us a little breathing-time, during which we can take count of the forces that are at work around us, and endeavour to guide or repress them. There should be no illusions on this point. That we are entering on a fresh period of order and regularity, there seem to be no grounds for believing. The army is elated by what it has achieved, and its leaders are penetrated with the conviction that their mission is to give Egypt liberty. The Notables, who are now in large numbers in Cairo, though they have taken into their own hands the right to ask for an extension of civil liberties, and deny the officers any right of petition or of interference in the matter, are at one with them in the desire to obtain some solid concessions. All is being done in an orderly and even exemplary manner: but the chance of any final settlement depends:—

"(1) On the army dispersing to the several quarters assigned to it.

"(2) On the moderation shown by the Notables in their demands.

"(3) On the tact and firmness of the Ministers in dealing with the army and the Notables. . . .

"I do not think it is at all my duty to oppose myself to the popular movement, but to try rather to guide and to give it definite shape. So long as the financial position of the country, or the influence of the Control, is not likely to be affected by concessions made to the Notables, I believe I should be very foolish to express any hostility to their wishes. It is in this sense that I propose to act, and to advise Chérif Pasha when the matter is ripe for discussion. It is, to sum up, by advising promptness in carrying out the necessary measures with the army, and, in the second place, by reasonable discussion of any petitions presented by the Notables, that we can alone hope to assist in converting the armistice into a peace."

Sir Auckland Colvin rightly judged the situation. Chérif Pasha was the nominal Prime Minister but Arábi, as Sir Edward Malet said, was the "arbiter of the destinies of the country." A local newspaper, *El Hedjaz*, which was the organ of the Arábist party, spoke of "the illustrious and magnanimous Emir, His Excellency Ahmed Bey Arábi." When Arábi received orders to leave Cairo with his regiment, he did not take his departure as a simple Colonel in command of a battalion. He made a sort of royal progress through the streets of Cairo, which were crowded with spectators on the occasion. He was received with enthusiasm, and, on arrival at the railway station, he harangued the troops. "Une ère nouvelle," he said, "vient de s'ouvrir pour l'Égypte, et grâce aux hommes placés à la tête des affaires, en qui nous devons avoir toute confiance, l'heure du développement et de la prospérité vient de sonner pour nous. Rendons hommage aux qualités et mérites qui distinguent les membres du nouveau Cabinet; et en particulier à Mahmoud Pacha Sami, notre Ministre de la Guerre . . . Je voudrais que vous puissiez comprendre tous, quelle glorieuse mission est réservée à une armée bien unie, bien commandée, bien disciplinée, et ne marchant que vers un but unique, le bien de la patrie. Vous avez une force entre les mains, et tous réunis vous en représentez une invincible."[1] A little later, a fête was given at Zagazig in honour of Arábi. About 1000 people were present, "all patriots" having been invited to attend. Arábi was received with enthusiasm. He made a speech in which he insisted on the necessity of reforms, inveighed against the employment of Europeans in Egypt, and said that he had three regiments in Cairo on whom he could rely to carry out his behests.

---

[1] This speech was, of course, delivered in Arabic. The French translation, quoted above, was subsequently published in the local newspapers.

Whilst, however, in public Arábi incited hatred to Europeans, in private he used a different language. On November 1, Arábi, Ali Bey Fehmi, and Toulba Bey Ismet had an interview with Sir Auckland Colvin. Arábi "described the Government of the Mamelukes and that of the present dynasty as being equally oppressive to the Arab population. His point was to show that up to the present the Egyptians have had no security for life or property. They were imprisoned, exiled, strangled, thrown into the Nile, starved, and robbed according to the will of their masters. A liberated slave was a freer man than a freeborn Arab. The most ignorant Turk was preferred and honoured before the best of the Egyptians. He illustrated his statement by the case of the Mufettish.[1] He then went on at great length to explain that men came of one common stock and had equal rights of personal liberty and security. The development of this theme took some considerable time, and was curious in its naïve treatment, but it evidently was the general outcome of the speaker's laboured thoughts, and was the expression, not of rhetorical periods, but of conviction. Passing on to the bearing of his reasoning on facts, he said that on the 1st February the Circassian rule (by which he meant the arbitrary Turkish régime) had fallen in Egypt; on the 9th September, the necessity of substituting for it the era of law and justice had been recognised and established. It was for law and justice that he and the army contended. He disclaimed in the plainest words the desire to get rid of Europeans, whether as employés or residents; he spoke of them as the necessary instructors of the people. He himself and the two officers (pointing to them) had never been to school. Intercourse with Europeans had been their school. He and all felt the need of it; they had no wish to question the need of Europeans in the administration; on the contrary, if more were required let them come. . . . The impression left on my mind was that Arábi, who spoke with great moderation, calmness, and conciliation, is sincere and resolute, but is not a practical man. The exposition, not the execution of ideas, is his strength. The other two Colonels are clearly more practical men, and act, I should say, as a sedative on Arábi, when his views excite and stimulate him too dangerously."

---

[1] Ismail Pasha's Finance Minister, who was assassinated in 1876.

Whilst the leading officers of the army were thus assuming the rôle of demagogues, the discipline of the men became daily more and more shaken. Early in November, a couple of soldiers, who had been arrested by the police for brawling, were forcibly released by their comrades from the guard-house to which they had been conveyed. A little later, the Government decided to change the Colonel of the artillery quartered in Cairo, but the soldiers of the regiment opposed the change, and declared that they would not obey any new Colonel who might be appointed. Their opposition was overcome, but not without considerable concessions having been made to them. About the same time, the band of a regiment quartered at Cairo refused to obey an order to play at the theatre. The troops at Suez also showed signs of insubordination, due to a soldier having been murdered by an Italian. These symptoms were sufficient to indicate that there was no public force in Egypt on whom reliance could be placed to maintain order.

In the meanwhile, the minds of the civil population were excited by the vernacular press, which attacked Europeans and their systems of government with virulence and appealed to Mohammedan fanaticism. "We are the prey," wrote one of these newspapers, "of two lions, England and France, who are watching for the favourable moment to realise their designs, hidden under a deceptive policy. . . . One day we hope to see our administrations cleared of all Europeans, and on that day we can say that England and France have rendered us a great service, for which we shall really thank them." "Some people," another newspaper wrote, "pretend that fanaticism is ruinous to progress, yet our best days were those in which we conquered the Universe by devotion to our faith. To-day we have neglected it, and we and our country are in the hands of strangers, but our misfortunes are a just punishment for our sins. O ye Ulema of El-Azhár! whose sacred duty it should be to combat this religious decadence, what will be your answer at the Day of Judgment to Him who can read the secrets of your hearts?"

Writings of this sort naturally led to retorts from the local European press. A French paper, *L'Égypte*, described Osman, the third of the Khalifs, as "le fanatique héritier d'un faux prophète." The editor's life was threatened, and he left the country. His newspaper was suppressed, as also was *El Hedjaz*, a newspaper which had specially distinguished itself by the violence of its language in support of Pan-Islamic views. "The suppression of this newspaper," Sir Edward Malet wrote, "especially while Arábi Bey was still at Cairo, was regarded as a sign of returning authority to the Government; and consequently had the effect of, to some degree, restoring confidence."

In spite of all this inflammatory literature, the mass of the people remained for some time indifferent to all that was passing. Eventually, however, the insubordination, which had shown itself in the army, began to spread to the civil population. This it was sure to do, for the reason given by Sir Auckland Colvin in a Memorandum dated September 24. "What," he said, "gives a show of justification to the recent conduct of the army and gives them support among great numbers of the respectable Egyptians, is that there is a great deal of truth in their complaints. They are sure of sympathy when they ask for justice, and protest against acts of arbitrary violence. The only way in which the Government can deprive them of the influence which they acquire by their appeal is by taking the game out of their hands."

When the year 1881 closed, therefore, the condition of affairs was as follows. The Khedive was brooding over the humiliation inflicted on him by his mutinous army, and was desirous of an opportunity to reassert his authority. Chérif Pasha was inspired by some statesmanlike principles, and was endeavouring to regain the legitimate authority of the Government, but he was wanting in the energy and strength of character necessary to control the turbulent elements which had been let loose. He was ably seconded by Sir Edward Malet and by Sir Auckland Colvin. Arábi was the real ruler of the country. He had the army at his back. Early in January 1882, he was appointed Under-Secretary of State for War, as "it was thought better that he should belong to the Government than be outside it." The population of Egypt was discontented, but the junction between the national party and the mutinous army was not complete. The civil element still looked askance at the soldiers. The native press was appealing to Mohammedan fanaticism, and inciting hatred against Europeans.

Under circumstances such as these, the utmost care was necessary. In the general ferment which then existed, a false step would be fatal. The British and French Governments were about to take a step which was to be well-nigh destructive of all hope of guiding the movement, and was to render foreign interference of some sort, whether Turkish or European, an almost unavoidable necessity.

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE JOINT NOTE

### January 1882

Proposal to establish an Anglo-French Military Control—Change of Ministry in France—M. Gambetta proposes joint action—Lord Granville agrees—Sir Edward Malet consulted—Sir Auckland Colvin's recommendations—M. Gambetta prepares a draft note—Lord Granville agrees—Instructions sent to Cairo—Proposed increase in the army—Reorganisation of the Chamber of Notables—Effect produced by the Note—Remarks on the Note.

Immediately after the mutiny of September 9, M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire proposed to Lord Granville that a joint Military Control should be established in Egypt. A British and a French General were to be sent to Cairo. These officers, the French Minister thought, "would be able to introduce order and discipline into the Egyptian army." The British Government asked "what consequences would ensue supposing these Generals were set at nought by the Egyptian army." To this question, "M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire answered that in such a case it might be necessary to make it unmistakably manifest that the Generals had the support of England and France. He spoke in very general terms of a naval demonstration, of the despatch of English and French ships of war to Alexandria, but he did not make any definite proposal or suggestion on the subject." The proposal was referred to Cairo, where it was scouted by

Chérif Pasha and by Sir Auckland Colvin. The fact that it should have been made showed how little the French Government realised the true nature of the local situation. At a moment when every endeavour was being made to incite the population against European interference of any kind, it was absurd to suppose that two European Generals could, by mere force of character, have obtained any control over the mutinous army. The only result of sending them would have been to cause another and probably more serious mutiny. This proposal was, therefore, allowed to drop.

No further proposal for joint action on the part of England and France was put forward until the middle of December, by which time a change of Ministry had taken place in France. M. Gambetta assumed the direction of affairs. His masterful spirit soon imparted a fresh impulse to Egyptian policy, in which he took a lively personal interest.

On December 15, M. Gambetta told Lord Lyons that "he considered it to be extremely important to strengthen the authority of Tewfik Pasha. On the one hand, every endeavour should be made to inspire Tewfik himself with confidence in the support of France and England, and to infuse into him firmness and energy. On the other hand, the enemies of the present system, the adherents of Ismail Pasha and Halim Pasha, and the Egyptians generally should be made to understand that France and England, by whose influence Tewfik has been placed on the throne, would not acquiesce in his being deposed from it. . . . Any interposition on the part of the Porte, M. Gambetta declared emphatically to be, in his opinion, wholly inadmissible. . . . He thought the time was come when the two Governments should consider the matter in common in order to be prepared for united and immediate action in case of need."

To this communication, Lord Granville replied on December 19: "Her Majesty's Government quite agree in thinking that the time has come when the two Governments should consider what course had better be adopted by both Governments. Her Majesty's Government also think that it is desirable that some evidence should be given of their cordial understanding; but that it requires careful consideration what steps should be taken in case of disorder again reappearing."

To any one who can read between the lines, this correspondence is instructive. It gives a correct indication of what was to follow. Both Governments were in a frame of mind which is dangerous in politics. They both thought that, in ordinary conversational language, "something must be done." The action of the French Government was directed by a fiery and energetic Minister who could not brook inaction. M. Gambetta thoroughly understood what he wanted. He wished to bring Egypt under Anglo-French control without an armed occupation, if that were possible; but if it were impossible, then he would accept the occupation as the best solution of the question.

On the other side of the Channel, affairs were directed by a Minister with a far calmer judgment than M. Gambetta, but who was wanting in initiative. It is a dangerous thing in politics for a responsible Minister to accept vaguely the principle that "something must be done," when he has not a clear idea of what should be done. The acceptation of the principle will not improbably lead him into doing things which he will subsequently wish had been left undone. At a later period, Lord Granville was to see that, though there "were objections to every possible course," at the same time, the main question was, "which of them offered the least inconvenience." But he discovered this too late. For the moment, he allowed his headstrong French associate to drag him in a direction opposed to that which, as a choice of evils, he most approved, namely, a Turkish occupation. He was eventually to drift into a solution to which he was much opposed, namely, a British occupation, and it was only by the accident of a change of Ministry in France that he was prevented from drifting into what was probably the worst solution possible, namely, an Anglo-French occupation.

On December 24, M. Gambetta developed somewhat more fully the nature of the steps which he thought might advantageously be taken by the British and French Governments. The Chamber of Notables was about to assemble at Cairo. Their meeting would, M. Gambetta thought, "produce a considerable change in the political situation of Egypt." He proposed, therefore, that "the two Governments should instruct their representatives at Cairo to convey collectively to Tewfik Pasha assurances of the sympathy and support of France and England, and to encourage His Highness to maintain and assert his proper authority. . . . This seemed to him a simple and practical measure, to be adopted without delay, and the two Governments might make it a starting-point for considering in concert what further steps they should be ready to take in case of need."

Lord Granville communicated M. Gambetta's proposal to Sir Edward Malet, and, on December 26, asked him whether he saw any objection to it. On the following day, Sir Edward Malet replied: "I see no objection to M. Gambetta's proposal. The support that the Khedive is most likely to require is towards the maintenance of the independence of the Chamber against the jealousies and suspicions of the Porte." Thereupon, Lord Granville instructed Lord Lyons to inform M. Gambetta that the British Government agreed to his proposal. When this message was communicated to M. Gambetta, he said that he would prepare a draft of an instruction to the British and French representatives at Cairo for submission to the British Government.

On December 30, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed to Lord Granville stating that it would be desirable to await the arrival of a despatch then on its way from Cairo before deciding on the terms of the communication which was to be addressed to the Egyptian Government. "It would be unadvisable," Sir Edward Malet added, "that the Khedive should be encouraged to hope that we would support him in maintaining an attitude of reserve towards the Chamber. It has been convoked with the full approval of Chérif Pasha, who looks to it for success and support. To discountenance it would be to play into the hands of the Porte, increase the influence of the military, and diminish that which we are now obtaining as befriending moderate reform. The reply of the Chamber to the Khedive's speech is stated to be extremely moderate and satisfactory."

The despatch to which Sir Edward Malet alluded in this telegram was dated December 26. It enclosed a remarkable Memorandum prepared by Sir Auckland Colvin, who wrote as follows:—

"The events of the last three months, and the movement still going on in Egypt, must necessarily make itself felt in the relations of Egypt with the two Powers. It will be well to describe briefly what the present movement seems to be, and in what direction it threatens to encroach on the ground held by England and France.

"In its origin, the movement is, I think, unquestionably an Egyptian movement against Turkish arbitrary rule. The rebound from Ismail Pasha's tyranny, the growing emancipation of the Egyptian mind owing to its close contact with Europeans, and the opportunity given by the anomalous position in which Egypt finds herself in relation severally to Turkey and the two Powers, have immediately led to the events we are now witnessing. Chérif Pasha, having been placed at the head of the movement, partly from conviction but more by weakness, is allowing himself to be carried forward on it, and will, I think, be eventually swept away by it. He is quite incompetent to control, and little able to guide it.

"The movement, though in its origin anti-Turk, is in itself an Egyptian national movement. For the moment, it is careful in its attitude towards Europeans because it has need of them in its duel with its immediate opponents, but it cannot look on them with favour, or be animated, *au fond*, by any other desire than that of eventually getting rid of them."

"So much for the nature of the movement; next, as to the direction in which it threatens to encroach upon the ground now occupied by England and France.

"There will be, I think, a twofold danger: first, a disposition to ignore or modify the engagements by which Egypt is bound; secondly, to get rid of foreign interference in branches of the administration in regard to which there exists no direct engagement.

"With regard to the first point, . . . if the right of voting the Budget, in other words, control over the finances, is given to the Chamber, the position of the Anglo-French Control will be profoundly modified. At present, it is effective because the Council governs the country, and in the Council the Control has a seat and an effective voice, whilst it is in constant and intimate relations with the different individuals composing the Cabinet. But it can have no relations, except of the most indirect character, with the Chamber, nor any confidence in the decisions of that irresponsible and ill-instructed body. How, if the Chamber is to vote the Budget, can the Control exercise any useful check on the finances? The Chamber, doubtless, in voting the Budget, can only do so within the conditions allowed by the Law of Liquidation; but those conditions are sufficiently elastic to allow of the finances being misapplied in a degree which would endanger financial equilibrium.

"We have caused this to be pointed out to Chérif Pasha, who is said to be prepared to modify his projects in accordance with our views. But whether the Chamber will accept his modification is another matter."

As regards the second point, that is to say, the desire to get rid of foreign interference in those branches of the administration in respect to which the Egyptian Government were under no distinct international engagement, Sir Auckland Colvin said that "successful attacks on one or more of those administrations would sap the moral influence of the Control, as well as destroy, proportionately as such attacks are successful, the material hold acquired by the Powers in the country."

Under these circumstances, Sir Auckland Colvin thought that for the guidance of himself and the other high British and French officials in Egypt, the "wishes of the two Cabinets should be expressed as to the attitude that they were to assume."

He then proceeded to lay the following recommendations before the British Government. "The liberal movement," he said, "now going on should, I think, in no wise be discouraged. It has many enemies, no less among Europeans than amongst Turks. But I believe it is essentially the growth of the popular spirit, and is directed to the good of the country, and that it would be most impolitic to thwart it. But precisely because I wish it to succeed, it seems to me essential that it should learn from the first within what limits it must confine itself. Otherwise, expectations may be formed and hopes raised, the failure of which may lead to its entire discomfiture. In all that is doing or to be done, neither the Government nor the Chamber should be allowed to forget that the Powers have assumed a direct financial control over the country and intend to maintain it. The Powers should not, in my opinion, accept any proposed measures which jeopardise this control, which is essential at present to the well-being of the country, and is, therefore, the main safeguard against the recurrence of an 'Egyptian Question.' All that is guaranteed by the Law of Liquidation and preceding Decrees should also be authoritatively placed beyond the pale of discussion. All that is designed to transfer the centre of financial authority from the Control to the Chamber should be especially discountenanced and, if need be, negatived, as neutralising and nullifying the agency through which the Powers assure themselves of the efficient conduct of financial affairs, for which they have made themselves responsible in Egypt.

"At the same time, I should give Chérif Pasha, or whoever may represent the Government, to understand that he is expected to discourage and oppose popular attacks on European administrations, and that the Powers will by no means look with indifference on the success of any such attacks. Each of these administrations is in itself, though doubtless with many imperfections, a centre of reform. They are the spokes of the wheel representing the Control. . . . The line, it will be thus seen, that I advocate, is the open and firm recognition by the Powers, through their diplomatic agents, at this critical juncture when Egypt is remoulding her internal reorganisation, of the material interest they possess and intend to maintain in the administration, leaving full liberty to the Egyptians to frame what measures they please for their internal government, so far as they are not inconsistent with the status acquired by the Powers. In fact, the Egyptian administration is a partnership of three. Unless the Powers are prepared to modify their share, they must secure and strengthen it, now that the Egyptians are in a state of movement and change. They cannot look on with indifference, and allow matters to be discussed and settled here without some intimation of their views. If a clear understanding is not imposed from the first, much misunderstanding will arise, embittering more, as I think, the relations between us and the Egyptians than would the authoritative declaration, now when the Chamber is about to meet, of the intentions of the Powers."

Sir Auckland Colvin's Memorandum has been quoted at length because it is important to ascertain what information as regards the situation in Egypt was before the British Government when it was decided to agree to M. Gambetta's proposal. The Memorandum was received at the Foreign Office on January 2. On the same day, the draft note prepared by M. Gambetta, which was to be sent to the British and French Consuls-General at Cairo, reached London. It was couched in the following terms :—

"You have already been instructed on several occasions to inform the Khedive and his Government of the determination of England and France to afford them support against the difficulties of various kinds which might interfere with the course of public affairs in Egypt. The two Powers are entirely agreed on this subject, and recent circumstances, especially the meeting of the Chamber of Notables convoked by the Khedive, have given them the opportunity for a further exchange of views. I have accordingly to instruct you to declare to the Khedive that the English and French Governments consider the maintenance of His Highness on the throne, on the terms laid down by the Sultan's Firmans, and officially recognised by the two Governments, as alone able to guarantee, for the present and future, the good order and development of general prosperity in Egypt, in which France and Great Britain are equally interested. The two Governments being closely associated in the resolve to guard by their united efforts against all cause of complication, internal or external, which might menace the order of things established in Egypt, do not doubt that the assurance publicly given of their formal intentions in this respect will tend to avert the dangers to which the Government of the Khedive might be exposed, and which would certainly find England and France united to oppose them. They are convinced that His Highness will draw from this assurance the confidence and strength which he requires to direct the destinies of Egypt and his people."

On January 6, the British Government agreed to M. Gambetta's draft, with the reservation "that they must not be considered as committing themselves thereby to any particular mode of action, if action should be found necessary." On

January 7, M. Gambetta wrote to Lord Lyons: "We observe with pleasure that the only reservation of the Government of the Queen is as to the mode of action to be employed by the two countries when action is considered necessary; and this is a reservation in which we participate."

It was, therefore, four days after the arrival in London of Sir Auckland Colvin's Memorandum, which is quoted above, that the British Government intimated their acceptance of M. Gambetta's proposals. On January 6, the instructions were telegraphed to Sir Edward Malet. Identic instructions were at the same time sent by the French Government to M. Sienkiewicz.

When these instructions reached Cairo, the local situation was as follows. The Chamber of Notables had been opened by the Khedive on December 26. Sultan Pasha, the President of the Chamber, and Suleiman Pasha Abaza, one of the leading members, replied to the Khedive's opening address in terms expressive of their loyalty and devotion to the public interests. On January 2, Sir Edward Malet reported: "At an interview which I had with the Khedive on the 31st ultimo I found His Highness, for the first time since my return in September, cheerful in mood and taking a hopeful view of the situation. He spoke with much satisfaction of the apparently moderate tendencies of the Delegates, and he expressed his belief that the country would now progress. The change was very noticeable, because His Highness had, up to the time of the opening of the Chamber, been full of misgiving, and I feared that this feeling was prompted not only by a mistrust of what the Delegates might do, but also by a dislike of the Chamber as an institution."

Two difficulties, however, lay ahead. In the first place, the military party wished the army to be increased to 18,000 men, the maximum figure allowed by the Firman of 1879. The Controllers were prepared to grant a certain increase, but they declined, on financial grounds, to give all that the military party desired, and in this matter they were supported by the British Government. Chérif Pasha was at first inclined to go farther than the Controllers approved in the direction of increasing the army. At last, however, "he sided entirely with the Control, and was equally resolved not to give way." On the eve of the meeting of the Chamber, it was decided to fix the Military Budget for 1882 at £E.522,000, an increase of £E.154,000 over the Budget for the previous year. The Minister of War, however, was not satisfied. He wished for a further increase of about £E.126,000, which would have enabled the army to be brought up to 18,000 men.

The other difficulty was of a different character. The Chamber was convoked under Ismail Pasha's law of 1866. It was known that, when the Chamber met, it would demand larger powers than those conferred by this law. In anticipation of such demands, the Egyptian Ministry had prepared new regulations, which were submitted to the Chamber on January 2. In sending these proposals to Lord Granville, Sir Edward Malet remarked: "Your Lordship will observe that guarantees are given in these regulations for the observance of the duties of Egypt towards foreign Powers. With the exception of these restrictions, the constitution of the Chamber is extremely liberal, and there is little doubt that, as time goes on, further changes in a liberal direction will be made." It remained to be seen whether the Chamber would be satisfied with the proposals of the Government.

The situation was evidently critical. Still, there was hope that, with very careful guidance, the difficulties of the moment might be overcome, and a complete upset of the State machinery obviated.

One main point should surely have been borne in mind before the Joint Note was delivered. It was that a National Party existed in Egypt. On this subject, the British Government appear to have been under a delusion from the first. They thought that the movement was wholly military, and, therefore, undeserving of sympathy. At a later period (July 22, 1882), when British military intervention had become necessary, Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons, said: "There have been periods in this history at which it has been charitably believed, even in this country, that the military party was the popular party, and was struggling for the liberties of Egypt. There is not the smallest rag or shred of evidence to support that contention. . . . Military violence and the regimen established by military violence are absolutely incompatible with the growth and the existence of freedom. . . . The reign of Cromwell was a great reign, but it did nothing for English freedom. . . . The reign of Napoleon was a splendid reign, but, founded on military power, it did nothing for freedom in France."

However true these general principles may be, nothing can be more certain than that at that time there existed in Egypt a national party who were working more or less in co-operation with the military party. Chérif Pasha, who was, as Sir Auckland Colvin said, an Egyptian *grand seigneur*, and who was one of the dominant race, recognised its existence, and wisely recommended a policy which would encourage the development of the national, at the expense of the military elements in the movement. Sir Edward Malet also[1] had distinctly warned the Government of the unwisdom of taking any step which would be construed as one of hostility to the national movement. One of the most able Europeans in Egypt at that time was Sir Auckland Colvin. He was a trained Anglo-Indian official, and was certainly not carried away by any Utopian ideas as to the possibility or desirability of rapidly developing free institutions amongst a backward Oriental people. His official position obliged him to look after the interests of the Egyptian Treasury, but his political insight was too keen to allow of his being deceived as to the true nature of the movement which was in course of progress. He had warned the British Government that "the liberal movement then going on should in no wise be discouraged. Though in its origin anti-Turk, it was in itself an Egyptian national movement."

Such, therefore, was the situation in Egypt when the British and French Governments communicated the Joint Note to their diplomatic representatives in Cairo.

The instructions were received at Cairo on the night of January 6. At 5.30 P.M. on the 8th Sir Edward Malet telegraphed to Lord Granville: "My French colleague and I communicated the dual note to the Khedive to-day." "His Highness," he added, "requested us to express to our respective Governments his sincere gratitude for the solicitude which it showed for his own welfare and that of his people."

In an article written by Mr. John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review* (July 1882), the effect of the Note is described in the following words: "At

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 218.

Cairo, the Note fell like a bombshell. Nobody had expected such a declaration, and nobody there was aware of any reason why it should have been launched. What was felt was that so serious a step on such delicate ground could not have been taken without deliberate calculation nor without some grave intention. The Note was, therefore, taken to mean that the Sultan was to be thrust still farther in the background; that the Khedive was to become more plainly the puppet of England and France; and that Egypt would, sooner or later, in some shape or other, be made to share the disastrous fate of Tunis. The general effect was, therefore, mischievous in the highest degree. The Khedive was encouraged in his opposition to the sentiments of the Chamber. The military, national, or popular party was alarmed. The Sultan was irritated. The other European Powers were made uneasy. Every element of disturbance was roused into activity."

Chérif Pasha called on Sir Edward Malet and M. Sienkiewicz on January 10, and said that the "message was regarded, first, as encouraging the Khedive to place himself in antagonism to reform; secondly, that the wording which connected, as it were, the events of September with the opening of the Chamber, showed a spirit unfavourable to the latter; thirdly, that it indicated a desire to loosen the tie to the Porte; fourthly, that it contained a menace of intervention, which nothing in the state of the country at present justified."

Sir Edward Malet's personal testimony was no less conclusive. On January 9, he telegraphed to Lord Granville: "The communication has, at all events temporarily, alienated from us all confidence. Everything was progressing capitally, and England was looked on as the sincere wellwisher and protector of the country. Now, it is considered that

England has definitely thrown in her lot with France, and that France, from motives in connection with her Tunisian campaign, is determined ultimately to intervene here." "It is too soon," Sir Edward Malet wrote on January 10, "to judge at present of the ultimate result of what has taken place; but for the moment it has had the effect to cause a more complete union of the national party, the military, and the Chamber, to unite these three in a common bond of opposition to England and France, and to make them feel more forcibly than they did before that the tie which unites Egypt to the Ottoman Empire is a guarantee to which they must strongly adhere to save themselves from aggression. The military, who had fallen into the background on the convocation of the Chamber, are again in everybody's mouth, and Arábi Bey is said to be foremost in protesting against what he is represented to consider as unjust interference."

The greatest General, it has been said, is he who makes the fewest mistakes. The same may be said of politicians and diplomatists. A remark made to me in this connection many years ago by Sir Francis Baring, the first Lord Northbrook, has sunk into my memory. I was staying at his country-house in 1864, having just returned from America, where I had been present as a spectator with the Northern army. I discussed the prospects of the war which was then going on, and expressed my opinions with all the confidence of youth. After listening for a while, Sir Francis said to me: "Now that you are a young man, you should write down not what has happened but what you think is going to happen. You will be surprised to find how wrong you are." Nearly half a century of official life, during which time I have been behind the scenes whilst events of some interest and importance were passing, has convinced me of the justice of the remark made by my shrewd old relative. I have myself made too many erroneous political forecasts to be inclined to criticise severely the mistakes of others. It must, however, be admitted that, in agreeing to the Joint Note, Lord Granville made a serious mistake. It is clear that the British and French Governments were aiming at different objects. The French Government, whilst admitting the partnership with England as an unavoidable, though perhaps unpleasant, necessity, wished to tighten the hold of France over Egypt. The British Government, on the other hand, wished above all things to avoid the necessity of serious interference in Egypt. When, on January 6, Lord Granville made a reservation in agreeing to the Joint Note to the effect that he was not committed "to any particular mode of action," and when, on January 7, M. Gambetta replied "c'est une réserve qui nous est commune," they were in reality far from being agreed. Each interpreted his reservation in a different manner. Lord Granville meant that, as a last resource, he would fall back on Turkish armed intervention. M. Gambetta, on the other hand, was "emphatically of opinion that any intervention of the Porte was wholly inadmissible." On January 14, the *République Française*, which was the recognised organ of M. Gambetta, declared that "it would be a grave error to imagine that the two Powers were not firmly resolved to follow up their platonic demonstration in a suitable manner if order should be disturbed, or if the authority of the Khedive should again be placed in jeopardy." In other words, M. Gambetta contemplated an Anglo-French occupation.

Another consideration should have made Lord Granville pause. Before he agreed to the Joint

Note, he was in possession of Sir Auckland Colvin's Memorandum of December 26. Sir Edward Malet drew his special attention to this memorandum, and urged that it should be considered before any decision was taken. It is an extremely able paper. It gave a very clear description of the local situation. Sir Auckland Colvin pointed out that it would be most "impolitic to thwart" the movement then going on in Egypt, the national character of which he fully recognised. His principal business, however, was to look after the finances of Egypt. He was aware that without European assistance it was hopeless to expect that the finances could be brought into good order. He deprecated anything which would jeopardise the financial control exerted by France and England. He advocated "the open and firm recognition by the Powers . . . of the material interest they possess and intend to maintain in the administration." In point of fact, the Egyptian administration was "a partnership of three," and he advocated the principle that no change could be made in the terms of association without the consent of all the partners.

All this was perfectly true. Moreover, it was natural that, holding the position which he held, Sir Auckland Colvin should have advocated views of this nature. They were views to which the French Government would readily have assented, for French policy in Egypt had, for a long time past, been guided to a great extent by the interests of individual Frenchmen in the solvency of the Egyptian Treasury. But the case of the British Government was somewhat different. They had, indeed, agreed to the appointment of Controllers. They had been parties to the Law of Liquidation. But it was going a distinct step farther to give a solemn pledge that they would interfere seriously if any complication arose, whether "internal or external, which might menace the order of things established in Egypt." If this pledge meant anything, it meant that the British Government would give material support to the Controllers; and, indeed, when the matter came to be discussed at a later period in Parliament, the case of the Government rested upon the alleged obligation to support the Control. An obligation, indeed, existed, but it did not extend nearly so far as the French Government, with the British Government following in their train, implied. The British Government might perfectly well have accepted as correct Sir Auckland Colvin's description of the facts of the situation, without adopting to the full his recommendations. They were in a position to take a more unbiassed view than Sir Auckland Colvin of the extent to which it was wise to go in the direction of interference in Egypt on purely financial grounds. There was no reason why, at this moment, the Controllers should not have been informed that they could rely on nothing but moral support, and that they must do the best they could, in the difficult circumstances in which they were placed, by persuasion and force of character. At the same time, the Egyptian Government and the Arábists might have been told that the British and French Governments had no wish to check any reasonable development of the national movement. The Khedive might have been encouraged to come to terms with his people rather than to resist their wishes. Attention might have been drawn to the views of the Controllers, on the ground that their financial knowledge and experience would be of great use to the Egyptian people, and that, in the event of their advice being systematically neglected, financial disorder would almost inevitably ensue. At the same time, it might have been hinted that no armed intervention was to be feared in respect to a mere financial question, however much the two Governments might regret to see financial disorder prevail. Armed intervention would be reserved for the time when life and property were no longer secure. It cannot, indeed, be stated with any degree of confidence that, if language of this sort had been held, the occupation of Egypt by foreign troops would have been avoided. The financial interests concerned were so great, and the risk that financial disorder would eventually have led to anarchy was so considerable, that it may well be that armed intervention of some sort would ultimately have become an unavoidable necessity. This, however, is mere conjecture. What is more certain is that, by following M. Gambetta's lead, the British Government pledged themselves to a greater degree of interference in Egyptian internal affairs, and especially financial affairs, than the actual circumstances of the case appear to have necessitated.

There can be little doubt that Lord Granville associated himself with M. Gambetta's Note because he failed to appreciate the effect which the Note would produce. In the debate which subsequently took place in the House of Lords, Lord Granville alluded to his despatch of November 4, 1881, which set forth the policy of the British Government.[1] That despatch, he said, "had the singular good fortune of being generally approved both at home and abroad." This statement was quite correct. When the despatch in question was communicated to Chérif Pasha by Sir Edward Malet, he "expressed great satisfaction at it, and stated that he should have it translated for insertion in the local press, as it ought to have an excellent effect." Lord Granville then went on to say: "At the end of December, M. Gambetta proposed that we should join with France in a Dual Note on the same lines as my despatch of November, but possibly accentuated as to its terms by the fact of its being drafted by a more eloquent pen." There was, however, a wide difference between both the tone and the substance of Lord Granville's despatch of November 4, and the Joint Note of January 8. The former was friendly and sympathetic. The latter was menacing. The former indicated that nothing but "the occurrence in Egypt of a state of anarchy" would be likely to lead to foreign intervention of a serious description in Egypt. The latter stated in somewhat harsh terms that the British and French Governments were determined to maintain "the order of things established in Egypt," an expression which might be held to cover a very wide field. Moreover, it was to be inferred from the despatch of November 4 that, if any foreign intervention were found necessary, the military forces of the Sultan would be employed. The British and French Governments deprecated the idea that they entertained "any self-aggrandising designs." On the other hand, the studied silence of the Joint Note in respect to the contingency of Turkish intervention naturally led to the supposition that, in an extreme case, Anglo-French and not Turkish intervention was contemplated. Neither, in so far as M. Gambetta was concerned, was the inference incorrect.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 203.

When carburetted hydrogen and air in certain proportions exist in a mine, no great harm is done so long as they are left alone. But if a miner enters with a lighted candle, an explosion at once takes place. This is what the French and British Governments did in Egypt when they issued the Joint Note. Previous to the issue of the Note, the National Party and the Military Party existed side by side. Chérif Pasha, aided by Sir Edward Malet and Sir Auckland Colvin, was laboriously and wisely endeavouring to keep the two parties separate. There was some hope that their united efforts would be successful, and that the National Party, which constituted the more healthy of the two elements, would eventually predominate over the Military Party, which constituted an element of obvious danger. At this moment, the British and French Governments appeared, without any sufficient reason, on the scene. They applied a lighted candle to the inflammable material. In an instant, the two elements combined with an explosion. The French Government possibly wished for an explosion. They were, at all events, callous as to whether an explosion occurred or not. But Lord Granville's action can only be explained on the assumption, either that, in his desire to act with the French Government, he momentarily forgot the safety-lamp of diplomatic prudence and reserve, or else that he did not sufficiently appreciate the fact that the mine was full of fire-damp.[1]

From the moment the Joint Note was issued, foreign intervention became an almost unavoidable necessity.

---

[1] It has been occasionally stated,—apparently on the authority of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt (*Secret History, etc.*, pp. 159 and 182),—that, in following the French lead during these negotiations, the British Government were influenced by their desire to conclude a Commercial Treaty with France. I believe this statement to be wholly devoid of foundation. Sir Charles Dilke, who was at the time Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, and whose evidence on this point seems to me conclusive, wrote, on June 27, 1907, to the *Manchester Guardian*: "At no time was the Egyptian policy of either Cabinet allowed to have a bearing upon the commercial relations of the Powers."

Whilst the proofs of this work were passing through the press, a second edition of Mr. Blunt's book was published. In the Appendix, a correspondence is given between Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, which is confirmatory of the opinion that there was no connection whatever between the policy set forth in the Joint Note and the commercial relations between France and England.

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE EFFECTS OF THE JOINT NOTE

January–February 1882

The British Government wish to explain the Joint Note—The French Government object—The Chamber of Notables claims the right to vote the Budget—Proposals of the British Government—Objections of the French Government—The Consuls-General instructed to oppose the Chamber—The Chamber demands a change of Ministry—Appointment of a National Ministry—The French Government press for an Anglo-French occupation—The British Government favour a Turkish occupation—Resignation of M. Gambetta—Remarks on his policy.

When Lord Granville agreed to the Joint Note he possibly thought that the best method to obviate the necessity of armed intervention in Egypt, whether Turkish or Anglo-French, was to threaten to intervene. The Note itself, indeed, almost expressed this view in plain words. It appeared, however, that the Note had produced an effect opposite to that which was intended. It had increased the chances that armed intervention would be necessary. Lord Granville recognised that he had made a mistake. He accordingly applied himself to the task of rectifying his error. His French partner, on the other hand, was far from being convinced that any mistake had been made. On the contrary, he adhered strongly to the policy indicated in the Joint Note.

On January 10, Chérif Pasha expressed a hope that the two Powers would make some further communication which would tend to remove the bad impression caused by the Joint Note. On the same day, Lord Granville instructed Lord Lyons to consult the French Government on the desirability of sending "an explanatory telegram to Sir Edward Malet to the effect that the character of the dual communication had been misunderstood."

On January 11, Lord Lyons reported the result of his consultation with M. Gambetta. M. Gambetta "was, of course, ready to study attentively any proposal of Her Majesty's Government, but he was himself decidedly of opinion that it might be extremely unadvisable to send any explanation at all of the dual communication."

Chérif Pasha further suggested that the Khedive might reply to the Note in a sense which would perhaps mitigate its bad effects. Sir Edward Malet (January 11) "did not see any particular objection" to this proposal, but his French colleague would not hear of it. He thought that the Egyptian Government "had only to listen to the advice of the two Powers and be silent."

In the meanwhile, the immediate effect of the Joint Note was to bring to a head the quarrel between the Ministry, backed up by the Controllers, and the Chamber of Notables. The Egyptian Budget was at that time divided into two parts. The first part dealt with the revenues which were assigned to the payment of the interest on the Debt. The second part dealt with the remainder of the revenues, which was left at the disposal of the Government. The Chamber of Notables claimed the right of voting the second part of the Budget. The Controllers and Chérif Pasha objected to this proposal, on the ground that, if the right claimed by the Chamber were accorded to them, the Council of Ministers and, therefore, the Controllers, would lose their hold over the finances of the country. "There was a chance," Sir Edward Malet telegraphed on January 10, "of arriving at an understanding, but this is apparently now passed. The Chamber may exercise its right with moderation and good sense, but it is a sanguine presumption. On the other hand, it is impossible now to suppress the Chamber except by intervention, which I earnestly deprecate. In fact, intervention could only be justified on the violation of the Law of Liquidation, not on the apprehension of its violation, and it is right to say that as yet I have heard of no intention on the part of any one to infringe it."

When this message reached Lord Granville, he made an effort to release himself from French guidance. As an English Liberal, he could not do otherwise than sympathise to some extent with the development of free institutions in Egypt. He appears also to have seen that he was being hurried rapidly along the road which led to increased intervention in the internal affairs of Egypt. Moreover, the somewhat overbearing conduct of the French was distasteful to the more fair-minded English statesman, whose character and training alike led him to favour compromise and to reject extreme measures. Lord Granville, therefore, telegraphed to Sir Edward Malet: "Her Majesty's Government do not wish to commit themselves to a total or permanent exclusion of the Chamber of Notables from handling the Budget. Caution, however, will be required in dealing with it, regard being had to the pecuniary interests on behalf of which Her Majesty's Government have been acting." The French Government, however, speedily placed a check on any idea of making concessions to the Chamber. Lord Lyons reported that M. Gambetta "expressed a very strong objection to any interference at all by the Egyptian Chamber with the Budget. He said that it behoved France and

England to be very firm, lest any appearance of vacillation on their part should encourage the pretensions of the Notables to lay their hands on the Budget; and he argued that their touching the Budget must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the arrangement made by the Liquidation Commission, to the subversion of the French and English Control, and to the ruin of the Egyptian finances. Finally, M. Gambetta expressed his conviction that any explanation of the joint communication of the two Governments would serve to swell the arrogance of the opponents of France and England, and encourage them in their designs upon the Budget."

Lord Granville yielded to French pressure. "The proposal of the Notables," he wrote to Lord Lyons, "at all events in its present shape, cannot be agreed to, although there may be points worthy of consideration hereafter. Sir Edward Malet has, therefore, been instructed to join his French colleague in supporting Chérif Pasha in his opposition to the demand of the Chamber in this respect." When this message was communicated to M. Gambetta, it became at once apparent that he had no intention of leaving the door open to future concessions. He seized at once on that portion of Lord Granville's message which was favourable to his own views, and rejected the rest. "A very strong instruction" had, he said, been already sent to the French representative at Cairo, "directing him to concert with Sir Edward Malet, and to insist upon Chérif Pasha absolutely rejecting the demands of the Notables, on the ground that they were incompatible with the state of things established in Egypt by international engagements with France and England." A compromise had been suggested at Cairo to the effect that the rejection of the demands should be accompanied by an assurance that they would be favourably considered at some later period. M. Gambetta, however, told Lord Lyons that he had "especially instructed M. Sienkiewicz not to listen for a moment to anything of the kind."

In spite of the support given by the two Powers to Chérif Pasha and the Controllers, it became clearer every day that the Chamber of Notables would not yield. On January 20, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed: "The Chamber will almost certainly vote the counter-project of Law, which places the administrative and financial power in its hands, and amounts to Government by Convention. . . . Armed intervention will become a necessity if we adhere to the refusal to allow the Budget to be voted by the Chamber."

Two days later (January 22), Sir Edward Malet asked Lord Granville whether "he might consider proposals which had been made to him unofficially by the President of the Chamber, with a view to coming to an arrangement which would accord to delegates from the Chamber the right to co-operate with the Ministers in the vote and examination of the Budget." Sir Auckland Colvin thought "that the negotiation might possibly result in a reasonable arrangement," but his French colleague, M. de Blignières, "was strongly opposed to receding in any way from an absolute refusal to allow the Chamber to participate in framing the Budget."

No answer appears to have been sent to this proposal, but a plan was elaborated in London under which some control over the public revenues would have been given to the Chamber of Notables. In sending this scheme to Lord Lyons, on January 25, Lord Granville said: "It seems clear that the claim of the Notables, in the form in which it is presented, is unacceptable, if not impracticable. . . . At the same time, it would be consistent with the desire which Her Majesty's Government and that of France entertain to encourage the judicious development of the institutions of Egypt, and for this purpose, as well as for the practical advantage that would be derived from it, it would seem advisable and probably would not be difficult to find matters confined to the expenditure side of the Budget in which the local knowledge of the Notables could be profitably employed."

When M. Gambetta received this communication, he replied (January 29) that the French Government agreed in principle to Lord Granville's proposals. Agreement in principle to the proposals made by a foreign Government is not unfrequently a diplomatic euphemism for total rejection. Such it was in the present case. M. Gambetta made so many objections in detail to Lord Granville's proposals as to render the concessions to the popular party in Egypt of little value. More especially, he was of opinion that the Budget of the Police and of the Administration of the Wakfs (religious endowments) should not be under the control of the Chamber of Notables.

Lord Granville's reply, which is dated February 2, brings out clearly the different spirits which animated the French and the British Governments. "Her Majesty's Government," Lord Granville wrote, "are unable, without further information, to offer an opinion upon the classification of the Egyptian Police, nor does it appear to them that the Governments of England and France are called upon to interfere in the question of Musulman religious foundations, in which they do not see that their interests are affected, and which would appear at first sight to be a matter with which the Chamber of Notables would be peculiarly competent to deal. . . . Her Majesty's Government apprehend that neither of these are questions upon which it rests with the Governments of England and France to give or withhold privileges, but if the Egyptian authorities are disposed to concede them, they do not think that it is for them to object."

It is clear from this correspondence that M. Gambetta wished to interfere in every detail of the Egyptian administration, even although no semblance of international right could be invoked to justify such interference. Lord Granville, on the other hand, wished to keep within the strict limits of international right, and to deal in a fair spirit of compromise with the national movement in Egypt.

Whilst these negotiations were going on in London and Paris, Sir Edward Malet and M. Sienkiewicz made a written communication to Chérif Pasha setting forth the attitude which the British and French Governments intended to adopt towards the Chamber of Notables. They explained "that the Chamber could not vote the Budget without infringing the Decrees establishing the Control, and that an innovation of the nature proposed by the Chamber could not be introduced without the assent of the English and French Governments." In order, however, not to close the door to a possible understanding, the two Consuls-General added that "if the Government of the Khedive deemed fit to open negotiations on the subject, they were prepared to transmit its proposals to their respective Governments, but they considered that such a negotiation should be on the understanding that the Government and the Chamber were agreed with regard to the rest of the proposed Organic Law." When Chérif Pasha received this communication, he wrote (February 1) to the Chamber explaining the situation, and requesting them "to formulate a basis of negotiation with the Powers."

This communication brought matters to a head. On February 2, a deputation from the Chamber waited on the Khedive and requested him to change his Ministers. "His Highness asked on what law of the Chamber they founded their right to make the request. This they could not answer, but insisted on a change. They also presented a copy of the draft Organic Law of the Chamber, and requested His Highness to sign, saying that the right to vote the Budget was not one for discussion with foreign Powers. His Highness dismissed them, saying that he would consider their request."

It was clear that a change of Ministry was inevitable. The Khedive was obliged to yield because, as he told Sir Edward Malet, "he had no force to resist." Later on the same day, the Khedive received the deputation again and asked them to "name the persons whom they desired as Ministers. This they at first declined to do on the ground that the selection was the prerogative of His Highness." On the following day, however, a further deputation from the Chamber waited on the Khedive, and stated that they wanted Mahmoud Pasha Sami, who was then Minister of War, to be appointed President of the Council. He was accordingly appointed on February 5. Arábi Bey was, at the same time, named Minister of War. The other members of the Cabinet, except Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, who assumed the direction of Foreign Affairs, were members of the National or Military parties, terms which had now become wholly synonymous.

The effect produced by the change of Ministry on the views of the Khedivial party in Egypt was marked. Until then, Chérif Pasha had entertained hopes of guiding the movement, and had stood out against any idea of armed Turkish intervention. He now informed Sir Edward Malet that "the only issue from the situation was the immediate despatch to Egypt of a Commissioner from the Porte, to be followed as soon as possible by a Turkish force. . . . He thought that by acting with tact, and accepting any Ministry the Chamber asked for, the moment could be tided over without public disturbance; but he was of opinion that, as the army had again exercised dictatorship, there was no hope for the future unless it were rendered powerless by force." The Khedive shared Chérif Pasha's views.

As events developed, it became more and more clear that M. Gambetta wished to force on an Anglo-French occupation of Egypt. On January 25, Lord Granville wrote to Lord Lyons in the following terms:—

"The French Ambassador told me yesterday evening that M. Gambetta had written to him expressing his opinion that it was desirable, in view of the probable crisis in Egypt, that the English and French Governments should come to an understanding as to the course which they should pursue. M. Gambetta, it appeared, had not in his letter given his opinion as to what steps should be taken, but he was desirous to know the views of Her Majesty's Government. Any Turkish intervention was, in M. Gambetta's opinion, the worst possible solution. M. Gambetta's attention had been called to a plan, which had appeared in the press, of calling in the co-operation of Europe. M. Gambetta remarked that the position of England in Egypt, in consequence of her Indian possessions, was unique. That of France, owing to her being a great African Power, and to other circumstances, was of the greatest importance.

Besides this normal position of the two Powers, arrangements had been entered into by Egypt, which had been acquiesced in by the European Powers generally. It would, in M. Gambetta's opinion, be most disadvantageous to Egypt and to the two Powers that these arrangements should be in any way weakened."

When Lord Granville received this communication, it was impossible to ignore any longer the radical difference of opinion which existed between the British and French Governments. In a despatch to Lord Lyons, dated January 30, he laid down the policy of the British Government: "Her Majesty's Government," he said, "desire to maintain the rights of the sovereign and vassal as now established between the Sultan and the Khedive, to secure the fulfilment of international engagements, and to protect the development of institutions within this limit. They believe that the French Government share these views. The question remains—If in Egypt a state of disorder should occur which would be incompatible with this policy, what measures should be taken to meet the difficulty? . . . It is to be regretted, but it appears to Her Majesty's Government apparent, that if such a contingency unfortunately occurred, there are objections to every possible course. The question remains — which of them offers the least inconvenience? . . . Her Majesty's Government have a strong objection to the occupation by themselves of Egypt. It would create opposition in Egypt and in Turkey; it would excite the suspicion and jealousy of other European Powers, who would, Her Majesty's Government have reason to believe, make counter-demonstrations on their own part, which might possibly lead to very serious complications, and it would throw upon them the responsibility of governing a country inhabited by Orientals under very adverse circumstances.

"They believe that such an occupation would be as distasteful to the French nation as the sole occupation of Egypt by the French would be to this country.

"They have carefully considered the question of a joint occupation by England and France, and they have come to the conclusion that, although some of the objections above stated might be lessened, others would be very seriously aggravated by such a course.

"With regard to Turkish occupation, Her Majesty's Government agree that it would be a great evil, but they are not convinced that it would entail political dangers so great as those attending the other alternatives which have been mentioned above. . . . The most important point is that the union of the two countries should be both real and apparent.

"M. Gambetta entertains objections to any further admission of the other European Powers to interference in Egyptian affairs. Her Majesty's Government agree that England and France have an exceptional position in that country owing to actual circumstances and to international agreements, and they also believe that inconvenience might arise from many Powers being called upon to join in any administrative functions; but they would submit for the consideration of the French Government whether it would not be desirable to enter into some communication with the other Powers as to the most desirable mode of dealing with a state of things which appears likely to interfere with the Firmans of the Sultan and the international engagements of Egypt."

The day after this despatch was written (January 31), M. Gambetta resigned office. He was succeeded by M. de Freycinet, under whose auspices a complete change took place in the Egyptian policy of the French Government.

During the short time M. Gambetta was in office, he exercised a decisive and permanent influence on the future course of Egyptian history. Lord Granville, M. de Freycinet, and others might do their best to put back the hands of the clock, but it was impossible that they should ever restore the *status quo ante Gambetta.* When he assumed office, the Egyptians entertained confidence in the intentions of England and France, especially in those of England. The amalgamation of the military and national parties in Egypt was not complete. The Egyptian movement was not altogether beyond control. When he left office, England and France were alike mistrusted by the Egyptians. The ascendency of the military over the national party was complete. Any hope of controlling the Egyptian movement, save by the exercise of material force, had well-nigh disappeared. Possibly, the movement was incapable of being controlled, but an *ex post facto* conjecture of this sort hardly appears a sufficient answer to the plea that, before reverting to extreme measures, every possible endeavour should have been made to control it.

In the opinion of many competent authorities, M. Gambetta adopted a mistaken policy. But there are always at least two sides to every question. It will be as well, therefore, to examine the case from M. Gambetta's point of view. It was stated by his friend and political supporter, M. Joseph Reinach, in an article, published in the *Nineteenth Century* of December 1882.

One portion of M. Reinach's argument may be very briefly treated. He complained that there was a want of "sincerity and cordiality" in the dealings of the British Foreign Office with France. Also he thought that public opinion in England "experienced the influence of certain Tories, who believed that it would be best to slacken proceedings as much as possible, in the hope of finding some opportunity for entering the Nile valley without France." As to this argument, all I have to say is that I believe I have seen every official document, whether published or unpublished, which is in the possession of the British Foreign Office, bearing upon the questions now under discussion. I have also had ample opportunities of ascertaining, by personal and verbal communications, the views of the principal actors on the scene. These events are now matters of past history. Many of the principal persons concerned are dead. Had there been any design of outwitting France, such as M. Reinach insinuated, I certainly should not be deterred by any false spirit of patriotism from stating the true facts of the case. I am, however, able to state with the utmost confidence that the insinuations of M. Reinach are without a shadow of foundation. The policy of the British Government at the time may or may not have been mistaken, but it was certainly sincere. When Lord Granville deprecated a British or Anglo-French armed intervention in Egypt, there can be no doubt that he meant what he said, and, moreover, that he had behind him the preponderating weight of British public opinion.

Leaving aside this collateral issue, I proceed to state M. Reinach's main argument. He thought that "grave mistakes" were committed by the British Government. The British Foreign Office failed to understand how dangerous the situation in Egypt had become when the Chamber of Notables met. Neither Mr. Gladstone nor Lord

Granville saw that "the Chamber of Notables was a sham assembly, Arábi an ambitious intriguer, encouraged and suborned by the fanatic Council of Constantinople, and the national party a ludicrous invention of some badly informed or too well paid journalist." M. Gambetta, on the other hand, "simply made use of his eyes and ears." He saw all these things plainly enough. "The hesitation of the English Government," M. Reinach continued, "to suppress the first acts of the insurrection plotted by the military *camarilla* at Cairo was much more than a lack of cordiality towards us (the French) and our alliance; it was, as far as Egyptian matters are concerned, pernicious and deplorable to the highest degree. It encouraged the spirit of rebellion among Arábi's partisans. It helped to kindle and rouse a fire, which a bucket of water shed at the proper time would have extinguished, into a conflagration where lives and treasures have been uselessly destroyed."

In other words, to put the matter plainly, M. Gambetta was convinced, as early as December 1881, that armed intervention of some sort in Egypt would, sooner or later, become necessary. Therefore, he did not hesitate to take steps which he knew might and probably would precipitate the final and, as he thought, inevitable conclusion.

It is impossible to prove that M. Gambetta was wrong. It is equally impossible to prove that he was right. There can be no doubt that the Arábi movement was in some respects a *bona fide* national movement. There can be equally little doubt that, if Arábi and his followers had been left at the head of affairs without any control, a state of the utmost confusion would have been produced in Egypt, and that eventually armed foreign intervention of some sort might have become necessary. In December 1881, however, the only practical question was, would it be possible to control and guide the movement? It is not certain that it would have been impossible to do so. A few able Europeans, like Sir Auckland Colvin, by the exercise of tact and judgment, by encouraging the civil elements of Egyptian society, and by the exhibition of some sympathy with reasonable native aspirations, might possibly in time have acquired a sufficient degree of moral control over the movement to have obviated the necessity for armed intervention. In any case, on the assumption that armed intervention was a solution to be avoided, save as a last resource, the experiment was worth trying. It is impossible, however, to read the correspondence on this subject without seeing that M. Gambetta did not regard armed intervention, provided it was Anglo-French and not Turkish intervention, in this light. On the contrary, he wished to bring about a state of things which would render it necessary. Obviously, therefore, from his point of view, the experiment was not worth trying. But his conclusion cannot command assent unless his premises be accepted, and there are strong grounds for holding that his premises were wrong. The essential point, at all events from the British point of view, was to avoid any armed intervention.

Mr. John Morley summed up the case in the following words, which appear to be correct. "It is impossible," he said, "to conceive a situation that more imperatively called for caution, circumspection, and deference to the knowledge of observers on the scene, or one that was actually handled with greater rashness and hurry. M. Gambetta had made up his mind that the military movement was leading to the abyss, and that it must be peremptorily arrested. It may be that he was right in supposing that the army, which had first found its power in the time of Ismail, would go from bad to worse. But everything turned upon the possibility of pulling up the army, without arousing other elements more dangerous still. M. Gambetta's impatient policy was worked out in his own head without reference to the conditions on the scene, and the result was what might have been expected."[1]

It may be conceded to M. Reinach that at this time "grave mistakes" were committed by the British Government in respect to Egypt. An Englishman who holds, as Lord Granville held, that a British or Anglo-French occupation of Egypt was above all things to be avoided, may with perfect consistency indicate those mistakes. But a Frenchman, more especially a partisan of M. Gambetta, has no right to criticise them. His mouth should be closed, for "the hesitations, indecisions, perplexities, half-measures, and delays which characterised English tactics," and of which M. Reinach complained, were due to the strong desire of the British Government to co-operate with the French. Lord Granville honestly wished to avoid any armed intervention in Egypt, and as honestly wished, if any intervention eventually became necessary, that the arms employed should be those of the legitimate Suzerain of Egypt, and not those of France or England. Had he been left from the first to act according to the dictates of his own judgment, it is possible that no foreign occupation would have been necessary, and it is more than probable that no British occupation would have taken place. But he allowed himself to be influenced by his French colleague, whose strong will and rash policy dragged him to such an extent along a road which he had no wish to follow, that eventually retreat became impossible. Englishmen may criticise Lord Granville for yielding too much to France. French criticism can only be based either on the assumption that M. Gambetta's action was best calculated to prevent a foreign occupation, or on the allegation that an Anglo-French occupation of Egypt was in itself to be desired as a preventive against evils which might arise, rather than as a cure for evils which had already arisen. The verdict of subsequent events has disproved the assumption. The allegation is a matter of opinion. M. Gambetta and M. Reinach held one opinion on this point. Lord Granville held another, and, as I venture to think, a wiser opinion.

---

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, July 1882.

During the parliamentary discussions which took place in England, a great deal of ingenious special pleading was devoted to showing that the occupation of Egypt was due, not to any action taken in 1881 and 1882, but to the appointment of European Controllers in 1879.[1] The facts connected with this subject may be explained by a metaphor. Suppose a man to be suffering from a severe but not necessarily fatal disease. He calls in a doctor who prescribes some mild remedies, and warns him that, unless he be careful, the disease will increase in virulence. He fails to profit by the advice which he has received, and in consequence gets worse. He then calls in another doctor, who abandons the mild treatment of his predecessor, and applies some more drastic remedy. The remedy, far from producing any good effect, aggravates the disease, and the patient dies. Under these circumstances, the friends of the patient, provided they be impartially minded, will not inquire carefully into the suitability or otherwise of the remedies applied by the first doctor. They will hold with reason that the patient's death was hastened, if indeed it was not caused, by the heroic but mistaken treatment of the second medical adviser. In the case of Egypt, Lord Salisbury stood in the place of the first doctor. Lord Granville, acting under the advice of his impetuous French colleague, stood in the place of the second.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 160.

Similarly, in France the mistakes made by M. Gambetta were forgotten, and the British occupation of Egypt was subsequently attributed by M. Joseph Reinach and other Gambettists to the fact that "the demeanour of the Freycinet Ministry was unworthy of France and of the Republic." Whether this accusation is true or the reverse is a matter for Frenchmen to decide. To an Englishman it would appear that the fact of M. de Freycinet's having been opposed to an Anglo-French occupation of Egypt does not relieve M. Gambetta from the responsibility of having largely contributed to create a situation from which it was well-nigh impossible to escape except by means of armed intervention of one sort or another.

The atmosphere of party politics, whether in France or England, is not congenial to the formation of an impartial judgment. A Minister, who is in the thick of a tough parliamentary struggle, must use whatever arguments he can to defend his cause without inquiring too closely whether they are good, bad, or indifferent. However good they may be, they will probably not convince his political opponents, and they can scarcely be so bad as not to carry some sort of conviction to the minds of those who are predisposed to support him. Politicians who are not bound by any strong party ties can weigh the arguments in a somewhat more judicial spirit. The conclusions stated in this chapter will, it is hoped, commend themselves to those who stand outside the immediate sphere of political partisanship.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE ARÁBI MINISTRY

FEBRUARY–MAY 1882

Proposal to revise the Organic Law—Mr. Wilfrid Blunt—M. de Blignières resigns—Concessions made to the army—Disorganisation in the provinces—The Porte protests against the Joint Note—The Powers are invited to an exchange of views—M. de Freycinet wishes to depose the Khedive—Lord Granville proposes to send Financial Commissioners to Egypt—Alleged conspiracy to murder Arábi—The Ministers resign, but resume office—M. de Freycinet assents to Turkish intervention—Arábi requested to leave Egypt—He refuses to do so—The Ministers again resign—The Khedive reinstates Arábi—And asks for a Turkish Commissioner.

THE official transactions of the next four months are recorded in several ponderous volumes, but the main facts admit of being very briefly stated.

The Chamber of Notables, whose powers were at once increased by the new Ministry, was, Sir Auckland Colvin wrote on February 13, "wholly under the influence of a mutinous and successful army." Some well-meaning proposals were put forward by the British Government with a view to revising the Organic Law in a sense which would be liberal but, at the same time, would not give excessive powers to the Chamber. A few months earlier, a suggestion of this sort might perhaps have led to some useful result. But the propitious moment had been allowed to pass, and it was now too late to stem the Egyptian Revolution, for such it really was, by redrafting an article in a Khedivial Decree. "It would be childish," M. de Freycinet thought (April 20), "to be discussing the pattern of a carpet when the house in which it was laid down was in flames." Sir Auckland Colvin's opinion was no less decisive and his metaphor no less apt. "The house," he said, "is tumbling about our ears, and the moment is not propitious for debating whether we would like another storey added to it. Until civil authority is reassured and the military despotism destroyed, discussion of the Organic Law seems premature and useless."

The civil elements of the national party still made some slight show of independence, but the tendencies which were at work to ensure the predominance of the mutinous army were too strong to be resisted. Not only did Arábi receive encouragement from the Sultan, but the advice of English sympathisers with the nationalist cause tended to consolidate the union between the military and civil elements of the movement.

Of these sympathisers, the most prominent was Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. Mr. Blunt had lived a good deal with Mohammedans, and took a warm interest in all that related to themselves and their religion. He appears to have believed in the possibility of a regeneration of Islam on Islamic principles. It chanced that he was in Egypt during the winter of 1881-82. He threw himself, with all the enthusiasm of a poetic nature, into the Arábist cause, and became the guide, philosopher, and friend of Arábi and his coadjutors. Mr. Blunt saw that he had to do with a movement which was in some degree unquestionably national. He failed to appreciate sufficiently the fact that the predominance of the military party would be fatal to the national character of the movement. At one period of the proceedings, his services were utilised as an intermediary between Sir Edward Malet and the nationalists. The selection was unfortunate, for it is abundantly clear from the account which Mr. Blunt has given of his own proceedings[1] that, with the exception of some knowledge of the Arabic language, he possessed none of the qualifications necessary to ensure success in the execution of so difficult and delicate a mission. He advised the nationalists to hold to the army or they would be "annexed to Europe."[2] The advice was, without doubt, well-meant, but it was certainly inopportune and mischievous. Whatever danger of "annexation to Europe" existed lay rather in the direction of the consolidation of the national and military parties than in that of their separation. A trained politician would have seen this. Mr. Blunt had had no political training of any value. He was an enthusiast who dreamt dreams of an Arab Utopia. He, therefore, failed to see what Chérif Pasha and others on the spot saw. He worked earnestly and to the best of his abilities to prevent a foreign occupation of Egypt. But the impartial historian must perforce record his name amongst those who, by ill-advised action at a critical moment, unwittingly contributed to bring about the solution which they most of all deplored.

Terrorised by a mutinous army on the one side, urged, on the other side, by their English advisers, whose weight with the British public they greatly overrated,[1] to seek salvation in submitting to military dictation, it can be no matter for surprise that the ignorant and inexperienced men who feebly represented genuine constitutionalism sank into insignificance and ranged themselves on the side of the mutineers.

---

[1] Blunt's *Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt.*

[2] A letter from Dr. Schweinfurth, the well-known botanist, was published in the *Times* of June 21, 1882. He related an interview he had had with some members of the Chamber. He commended their moderation and good sense, and then went on to say: "From England they expect more for their cause than from France. They imagine that in England you are all of the same complexion as Mr. Blunt, or at least, as Sir William Gregory. At Ghirgeh, they showed me with much satisfaction Mr. Blunt's telegram addressed to all the members of the Egyptian Chamber: 'Si vous allez vous désunir de l'armée, l'Europe vous annexera.'" See also *Secret History, etc.*, p. 271.

The power of the Controllers disappeared. Sir Edward Malet wrote to Lord Granville (February 20) that he thought it had "become a question whether the Control should be maintained, now that it existed only in name." M. de Blignières resigned his appointment.

Mahmoud Pasha Sami, the new President of the Egyptian Council, shared the usual fate of revolutionary leaders. He was violently attacked because he failed to carry out his engagement that all Europeans should be turned out of Egyptian employment. Arábi, Sir Auckland Colvin wrote (February 27), warned him that "he was like a man trying to balance himself on a plank." Every effort was made to keep the army in a good humour. Fresh battalions were raised. The pay of the officers and men was increased without reference to the sufficiency of the revenue to meet the fresh expenditure thus incurred. Hundreds of officers were promoted. The Khedive pointed out that "the law required the previous examination of officers under the rank of full Colonel," but Arábi was ready with an explanation. The officers, he said, "were of such well-known capacity that examination was unnecessary. Moreover"—and this was perhaps more to the point—"they refused to be examined, and were supported in their refusal by the rest of the army." The Khedive was obliged to yield. Clearly, as Sir Charles Cookson wrote, "all the pretended aspirations for legality and constitutional liberty had ended in substituting the indisputable will of the army for all lawful authority."

---

[1] See Appendix to this chapter.

In the provinces, complete disorganisation prevailed. The Moudirs had lost all authority. At Mansourah and elsewhere, Mr. Rowsell, the English administrator of the State Domains, found that "all power was paralysed." In the neighbourhood of Zagazig, the British Vice-Consul reported, "armed bands continue to attack and pillage villages." An active trade was carried on in firearms. At Damietta, the black soldiers of Abdul-Al's regiment robbed and ill-treated the inhabitants with impunity. An unwise attempt was made by the Government to deprive the Bedouins of the privileges which they had enjoyed since the days of Mehemet Ali, but the heads of the various tribes met on April 8, and declared that they would allow no interference in their affairs. The banks would no longer lend large sums of money; petty usurers asked as much as 6 per cent monthly interest on small loans. Land was everywhere losing in value. Sir Edward Malet quoted one example of land, bought a few months previously for £60, being sold at £28 an acre. An officer of the army told the peasants at Zagazig that the acres belonging to their landlords "were theirs by right." In a word, all the usual symptoms of revolution were prevalent in Egypt. The moderate men became alarmed. "The disorganised and uneasy state of the provinces," Sir Charles Cookson wrote, "has caused many of the Notables and others who have a stake in the country to draw back from the hastily formed alliance with the military party, and seek for other means of escaping from its domination."

It is now time to return to the history of diplomatic action. The Porte protested against the Joint Note. The answer of the four Powers

(Russia, Austria, Germany, and Italy) was to the effect that they "desired the maintenance of the *status quo* in Egypt on the basis of the European arrangements and of the Sultan's Firmans, and that they were of opinion that this *status quo* could not be modified except by an understanding between the Great Powers and the Suzerain Power." This reply did not answer the expectations of the Sultan. He was irritated by the use of the word "Suzerain" instead of "Sovereign."[1] Moreover, his design of acquiring a more absolute control over Egyptian affairs was in no way advanced by the opinion expressed by the Powers that any change in the Egyptian *status quo* was a matter of general European interest.

The protest of the Porte, however, stimulated the British and French Governments to place themselves in communication with the other Powers. The British Government took the initiative. The French Government were invited to join Her Majesty's Government in addressing the Powers. M. de Freycinet agreed "with the reservation that it be well understood that the French Government reserve their adhesion to any military intervention in Egypt, and that they will examine that question when the necessity for any intervention shall have arisen." Accordingly, on February 11, a Circular was addressed by the British and French Governments to the Cabinets of Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and St. Petersburg, asking them whether they would be prepared to enter into an exchange of views on the affairs of Egypt. "The

---

[1] The Sultan is Suzerain of Bulgaria. Article 1 of the Berlin Treaty says: "Bulgaria is constituted an autonomous and tributary Principality under the Suzerainty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan." In so far as Egypt is concerned, the word "Sovereign" is technically more correct. The Firman of 1841 granted to Mehemet Ali uses the expression "Ma connaissance Souveraine." The Sultan cannot depose the Prince of Bulgaria. Technically speaking, he can depose the Khedive, and, in fact, in 1879 he deposed Ismail Pasha.

Governments of England and France," it was said, "do not consider that a case for discussing the expediency of an intervention has at present arisen. . . . But, should the case arise, they would wish that any such eventual intervention should represent the united action and authority of Europe. In that event, it would also, in their opinion, be right that the Sultan should be a party to any proceeding or discussion that might ensue."

The proposal to treat Egyptian affairs as an international, rather than as an exclusively Anglo-French question, was well received. All the Powers expressed their willingness to enter into an exchange of views. No progress had, however, so far been made as to the nature of the views which were to be exchanged. Until the British and French Governments could agree as to the proposals they were to submit to the other Powers, it was hopeless to expect any general agreement.

Both Governments were, however, daily becoming more convinced that some action was necessary. "The Egyptian question," M. de Freycinet said to Lord Lyons (April 3), "was like a bill of exchange. The exact day at which the bill would be presented for payment was not known, but it was quite certain that the presentation would not be long delayed, and it would be only prudent to provide means of meeting the liability before the constable was upon us." The remedy he proposed was to depose the Khedive, and to substitute Halim Pasha in his place. The authority of the Sultan would, without doubt, have to be brought into play, but M. de Freycinet thought that "the great object was to ward off a military intervention of whatever kind it might be, and he would rather the Sultan should depose twenty Khedives than send one soldier to Egypt." Lord Granville rejected this proposal. He did not see that it would do any good, and, moreover, he pointed out "that after the declarations of support so recently given to the Khedive, in the name of the British and French Governments, it would be an act questionable in point of good faith if we were now not only to abandon him, but to combine for his removal without any new or more apparent cause than can at present be shown to exist."

The Khedive also found a warm defender in Sir Edward Malet, who expressed himself in the following terms: "When I hear him (the Khedive) abused for lack of energy and capacity, I doubt whether there be many men who would have been able to extricate themselves from the difficulties in which he has been involved." In the place of so drastic a remedy as the deposition of the Khedive, Lord Granville put forward a characteristic proposal of his own. The idea of sending special Commissioners to report on the situation in Egypt appears, during a considerable period, to have presented some strong attractions to the British Government. Lord Granville now fell back on a proposal of this sort. He suggested to the French Government that "the British and French Representatives at Cairo might each for the moment be advantageously supported by having at their side an adviser possessed of the necessary technical experience, who had been in the habit of considering economical reforms, and to whom they might have recourse for an independent and impartial opinion upon any points which seemed to them doubtful or complicated." Lord Granville wished this proposal to be considered by the French Government, but he "had no wish to press the suggestion if M. de Freycinet saw decided objections to it." M. de Freycinet saw some obvious objections to the proposal; amongst others, it would, he thought, "be difficult to prevent the

Controllers from supposing that it was with a view to controlling them that the agents were to be furnished with special Financial Advisers. They would, in fact, suppose that they would sink from the position of 'Contrôleurs' into that of 'Contrôlés.'" This proposal was, therefore, allowed to drop. A more strange idea than that of sending two gentlemen, "who had been in the habit of considering economical reforms," in order to control a mutinous army certainly never entered into the head of a responsible statesman.[1]

Whilst these barren diplomatic negotiations were going on in Europe, another incident occurred in Cairo of a nature to precipitate the crisis, which had now become inevitable. A large number of Egyptian officers had, as has been already mentioned, been promoted. This caused great discontent amongst the Turkish and Circassian officers who had been passed over. Arábi and his colleagues feared their resentment. A story was, therefore, got up that the leaders of the military and nationalist party were to be murdered. On April 12, nineteen officers and soldiers were arrested on a charge of conspiracy to murder Arábi. By April 22, as many as forty-eight persons had been arrested. Amongst these, was Osman Pasha Rifki, the late Minister of War. They were tried by a Court-martial, whose proceedings were secret. They were undefended by counsel. Forty officers, including Osman Pasha Rifki, were condemned to exile for life to the farthest limits of the Soudan.

Arábi's account of this affair is given in a document entitled "Instructions to my Counsel," which was subsequently published. "A Mameluke slave of the Khedive's," he said, "and a Circassian, made a plot to administer arsenic to Abdul-Al Pasha at the Koubbeh school. The Circassian succeeded in putting some of the poison into the Pasha's milk, which he took nightly, but fortunately the servant found it out in time to save his life. . . . This plan having failed, another was set on foot to get rid of me. A party of Circassians agreed together to kill me as well as every native Egyptian holding high appointments." There does not, however, appear to have been a shadow of trustworthy evidence to show that the charge of conspiracy was true. The verdict of the Court-martial is a wild rambling document, bearing the character of a political manifesto rather than that of a judicial decision. Like most ignorant men, Arábi was very suspicious. The conspiracy to murder him merely existed in his own imagination.

---

[1] This proposal, though in a somewhat different form, appears to have emanated from Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. On March 20, 1882, he wrote to Lord Granville suggesting that "something in the nature of a commission of inquiry" should be sent to Egypt.—*Secret History, etc.*, p. 232.

The Khedive was now placed in a position of great difficulty. The sentence of the Court-martial was manifestly unjust, but it was questionable whether he would be able to resist the pressure brought to bear on him by his Ministers, who were, of course, in favour of its being confirmed. The Porte interfered. Osman Pasha Rifki bore the title of Ferik, or General, which was conferred by the Sultan and could only be taken away by His Imperial Majesty. The Sultan, therefore, desired that the matter should be referred to him. The Khedive answered that he would comply with this request. By doing so, he threw himself into the arms of the Porte, and assumed an attitude of direct hostility to his Ministers, but he explained to Sir Edward Malet (May 6) that he thought it better that Egypt should lose some of its privileges at the hands of the Porte, and that proper authority should be re-established, rather than that the existing misgovernment should continue. The Ministers were much incensed. The President of the Council told Sir Edward Malet "that if the Porte should send an order to cancel the sentence of the Court-martial on the Circassian prisoners, the order would not be obeyed, and that if the Porte sent Commissioners, they would not be allowed to land, but would be repulsed by force, if necessary."

The defiant attitude adopted by the Egyptian Ministers towards the Porte was, without doubt, in a measure due to the belief that, in resisting Turkish interference, they could count on French support. As a matter of fact, directly it was suggested that, by reason of Osman Pasha Rifki's rank, Turkish interference was necessary, M. de Freycinet stated that "he was strongly of opinion that the Khedive should himself grant the pardon immediately by virtue of his own prerogative without waiting for action on the part of the Porte." Lord Granville agreed. Identic instructions to advise the Khedive in this sense were, therefore, sent to the British and French representatives at Cairo. The Khedive acted on this advice. On May 9, he signed a Decree commuting the sentence of the Court-martial on the forty officers into exile from Egypt, but not to the Soudan. The commutation of this sentence widened the breach between the Khedive and his Ministers. On May 18, Sir Edward Malet reported that "relations had been broken off between the Khedive and his Ministers," and that "the situation had become most serious." The representatives of the great Powers, with unconscious humour, requested the President of the Council "to describe the situation." The latter replied that, as the Khedive and his Ministers could not agree, the Chamber had been convoked without the authority of the Khedive having been requested. "The complaint against His Highness was that he had acted in a way to diminish the autonomy of Egypt, and on many occasions without consulting his Ministers." There appears to be little doubt that the intention of the military party at this time was to depose the Khedive, to exile the family of Mehemet Ali, and to appoint Mahmoud Pasha Sami Governor-General by the national will.

By this time, the civil elements in the national movement had again become alive to the folly of their conduct in allying themselves with the mutineers. Sultan Pasha, the President of the Chamber, told Sir Edward Malet that "in overthrowing Chérif Pasha the Chamber had acted under pressure from Arábi, and that the very deputies who had then insisted on the course taken, finding that they had been deceived, were now anxious to overthrow the Ministry." On May 13, Sir Edward Malet wrote: "The President of the Chamber and the deputies ostensibly take the part of the Khedive, but they have requested His Highness to pardon and to be reconciled with his Ministers. The Khedive has refused. His Highness remains firm, and will not be reconciled to a Ministry which has defied him openly, threatened himself and his family, and, by the convocation of the Chamber without his sanction, has violated the law. At Cairo, there is considerable uneasiness, and many persons are leaving."

The President of the Council then tendered his resignation to the Khedive. The British and French Consuls-General proposed that Mustapha Pasha Fehmi should be appointed President. "We agree," Sir Edward Malet said, "to the nomination of any one, except Arábi Pasha." The leaders of the military party had stated that, if the Ministry were changed, they would not be responsible for the maintenance of order. The British and French Governments, however, would not accept this denial of responsibility. Their representatives in Cairo were authorised "to send for Arábi and inform him that if there is a disturbance of order, he will find Europe and Turkey, as well as England and France, against him, and will be held responsible."

When Mustapha Pasha Fehmi was offered the Presidency of the Council, he declined to accept the post. The Ministers also said that "they would only resign if the Chamber of Notables desired it." The President of the Chamber "declared that it would be impossible to change the Ministry so long as the military power continued to be vested in Arábi Pasha." Under these circumstances, the British and French Consuls-General informed the Khedive that "personal questions must be set aside." As His Highness was unable to form a new Ministry, he was "requested to enter into relations with the present one."

It was by this time evident that some decisive intervention in Egypt was inevitable, but the question of whether that intervention should be Turkish or Anglo-French still remained undecided. On May 21, however, M. de Freycinet took a great step in advance. He recognised the possibility of Turkish armed intervention. The following proposals were submitted to the British Government:—

1. An Anglo-French squadron was to be sent to Alexandria.

2. The British and French Governments were to "request the Porte to abstain for the present from all intervention or interference in Egypt."

3. The Cabinets of Germany, Austria, Russia, and Italy were to be informed of the despatch of

an Anglo-French squadron to Alexandria, and they were to be asked to send to their representatives at Constantinople similar instructions to those sent to the British and French Ambassadors.

4. The French Government agreed to abandon the idea of deposing the Khedive, "a plan which, if adopted in time, might, in their opinion, have prevented serious complications."

5. As regards the important question of Turkish intervention, M. de Freycinet expressed himself in the following terms: "The French Government continue to be opposed to Turkish intervention, but they would not regard as intervention a case in which Turkish forces were summoned to Egypt by England and France, and operated there under English and French control, for an object, and on conditions which France and England should have themselves defined. If, after the arrival of their ships at Alexandria, the French and English Governments should consider it advisable that troops should be landed, they should have recourse neither to English nor to French troops, but should call for Turkish troops, on the conditions above specified."

6. The Consuls-General were to be instructed "to recognise as legal no other authority than that of Tewfik Pasha, and not to enter into relations with any other *de facto* Government, except for the purpose of securing the safety of their countrymen."

Lord Granville at once acceded to these proposals. He thought, however, that in requesting the Sultan to abstain for the present from all interference in Egypt, it would be "desirable to intimate in guarded language that it was not improbable that further propositions might be made hereafter to the Porte." Moreover, Lord Granville suggested "in view of the very large force which it is proposed should be despatched to Alexandria by England and France, that it might be as well, if not inconsistent with the other objects which M. de Freycinet has in view, that the other Powers, including Turkey, should be invited to have their flags represented." In other words, the British Government wished for Turkish executive action under international sanction. Both the Turkish action and the international sanction were, on the other hand, distasteful to the French. M. de Freycinet, however, agreed to Lord Granville's first proposal so far as to instruct the French Ambassador at Constantinople that he might "hint to the Sultan, in very moderate terms, that it was not improbable that further proposals might be made to the Porte hereafter." As regards the international sanction, M. de Freycinet would make no concession. "I am not of opinion," he said, "that we should at present invite the other Powers to send ships by the side of ours. It is not, in my judgment, for our own interest that we should in this way take an initiative which would deprive the Anglo-French action of the directive character, which Europe herself assigns to it, and appears desirous to leave to it in Egypt." When M. de Freycinet's reply was communicated to Lord Granville, he "told the French Ambassador that Mr. Gladstone agreed with him in regretting that the other Powers had not been invited to co-operate. Her Majesty's Government thought this a mistake, but as the French Government had gone so far to meet the views of Her Majesty's Government, they have concurred in the course taken."

The weak part of this scheme was that the intention to invite Turkish co-operation was not publicly announced. Sir Edward Malet at once saw the danger. On May 14, he telegraphed to

Lord Granville: "Knowing the feeling here (*i.e.* at Cairo) I fear that if the Sultan's implied co-operation is not secured and made known, and if he does not give his countenance at the beginning to the action of the Powers, there is a risk that the Chamber and the army may again coalesce and offer resistance, which would otherwise, I think, be impossible." The Khedive was no less anxious to obtain the moral support of the Sultan. On May 20, he asked Sir Edward Malet "to beg the English Government to induce the Porte to send him a telegram approving of his entering into negotiations with us for the restoration of his authority, and the maintenance of the *status quo.* He wished for it as a lever to act on the deputies, and dissipate the idea, which was then taking root with them and the military, that the Sultan opposed the action of the Powers." A frank explanation of the intentions of the Powers might perhaps, even at this late hour, have ensured the cordial co-operation of the Sultan. As it was, he was irritated by the action taken by the British and French Governments, more especially by the despatch of an Anglo-French squadron to Alexandria. The Turkish Ambassadors at Paris and London were instructed to protest. The despatch of the squadron also gave offence to the other Powers, who thought that they should have been previously consulted on the subject, and, therefore, declined to join in the Anglo-French recommendation to the Sultan that he should abstain from all interference in Egypt.

The dislike of the French Government to Turkish intervention was, however, such as to render it impossible to obtain the full advantage which might otherwise possibly have been derived from the co-operation of the Sultan. On May 19, M. de Freycinet told Lord Lyons that "there were very strong objections to speaking openly at that moment either at Constantinople or elsewhere of the agreement to call in Turkish troops, in case military intervention in Egypt should be unavoidable." On May 22, therefore, Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Edward Malet: "The French Government are nervous lest the conditional consent they have given to Turkish intervention may be publicly announced at Cairo or Constantinople, and produce an explosion of public feeling at Paris." Under these circumstances, all that could be done was to send a somewhat vague explanatory telegram to the British and French representatives at Berlin, Rome, St. Petersburg, Vienna, and Constantinople. "It was never proposed," Lord Granville said, "to land troops or to resort to a military occupation of the country. Her Majesty's Government intend, when once calm has been restored, and the future secured, to leave Egypt to herself, and to recall their squadron. If, contrary to their expectations, a pacific solution cannot be obtained, they will concert with the Powers and with Turkey on the measures, which shall have appeared to them and to the French Government to be the best." At the same time (May 23), Lord Dufferin told the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Constantinople that if "instead of helping to terminate the crisis in the desired manner, the Porte complicates the situation by falsifying facts and running counter to our advice, we shall double the number of our ships at Alexandria, and their stay will be indefinitely prolonged." Lord Dufferin "had already hinted to Said Pasha confidentially that if the Ottoman Government acted in a loyal and reasonable manner, the first-fruits of their moderation might be the countermanding of the additional ships of war which were under orders to join the squadron."

In the meanwhile (May 19), the British and

French Consuls-General had been instructed "to advise the Khedive to take advantage of a favourable moment, such, for instance, as the arrival of the fleets, to dismiss the present Ministry and to form a new Cabinet under Chérif Pasha, or any other person inspiring the same confidence." Sir Edward Malet replied (May 20) that he and M. Sienkiewicz had considered these instructions. "Until the supremacy of the military party is broken," he added, "the Khedive is powerless to form a new Ministry. No one will accept the task until this is effected." He, therefore, proposed to enter into negotiations with Arábi and his three principal coadjutors with a view to inducing them to leave the country. Sultan Pasha, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, consented to act as intermediary. He questioned the Consuls-General as to "whether there was any infringement of the Porte's sovereign rights in the action of England and France." Sir Edward Malet replied that "the intention of the two Governments was to respect those rights and in no way to infringe them." The negotiation failed. Arábi positively refused "either to retire from his position or from the country." An Egyptian Colonel said, in the presence of a member of the French Consular service, that "the officers would hew Arábi in pieces if he deserted them." A Cabinet Council was held at which it was decided that the Government should reply "to any official demands made upon them that they did not admit the right of the English and French Governments to interfere, and that they recognised no ultimate authority but that of the Sultan." At the same time, the President of the Chamber informed the French Consul-General that "he could no longer rely upon the deputies, on account of the feeling against the intervention of the two Powers which was gaining ground." It was, in fact, clear that the fears which Sir Edward Malet had expressed on May 14 had been realised. The reluctance of the French Government to appeal to the authority of the Sultan had cast suspicion on the intentions of the Western Powers, and had again united the civil and military elements of the Egyptian movement. More than this, the jealousy shown by the French of Turkish intervention had resulted in strengthening the unnatural alliance between Arábi and the Sultan. Essad Effendi, a confidential agent of the Sultan, arrived at Cairo. It was certain that the defiant attitude adopted by the Egyptian Ministers was in a great measure due to the messages brought by this individual from Constantinople.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the failure of the negotiations with Arábi, Sir Edward Malet and M. Sienkiewicz had, on May 21, suggested to their respective Governments that they should be authorised to make an official demand that Arábi and his principal coadjutors should leave the country. When, however, they saw the decided attitude taken up by the leaders of the military party, they hesitated to adopt so strong a measure on their own authority. On May 23, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed to Lord Granville in the following terms: "M. Sienkiewicz and I hesitate to make an official demand to the Ministers, which we know beforehand will be met with refusal, until we are in a position to declare what would be the consequences of such a refusal, and I accordingly venture to beg Your Lordship to favour me with further instructions. The present situation has been brought about by the Ministers and the people persisting in a belief that the two Powers will not despatch troops, and that the opposition of France renders a Turkish intervention impossible. In the meanwhile, military preparations are being carried on, and a fanatical feeling against foreigners is sedulously fostered. I am still of opinion that if the Sultan declares himself at once, and if it be known that troops are ready to be despatched, we may succeed without the necessity for landing them." On receipt of this message, Lord Granville telegraphed (May 24) to Lord Lyons in the following terms: "Tell M. de Freycinet that the news from Cairo is disquieting. Time is all important. Propose to him that the two Governments should telegraph a Circular to the Powers, requesting them to join in asking the Sultan to have troops ready to send to Egypt under strict conditions."

No immediate answer was sent to Sir Edward Malet's telegram, but the two Governments authorised their Consuls-General to take whatever steps they considered possible to ensure the departure from Egypt of Arábi and his principal partisans, and the nomination of Chérif Pasha to be President of the Council.

When this telegram reached Cairo, a document was being circulated amongst the officers and soldiers of the army in which it was stated that the British and French Governments insisted on the following points: All the Ministers were to be exiled; all the officers on the Army List were to leave Egypt; the entire army was to be disbanded; Egypt was to be occupied by foreign troops; the Chamber was to be dissolved. "The French representative and I," Sir Edward Malet telegraphed on May 25, "persuaded that the situation would become still further complicated, and even dangerous to the lives of foreigners, if these conditions were believed to be true ones, determined upon the official step from which we had hitherto shrunk." They handed an official Note to the President of the Council, in which the following demands were set forth:—

"1. The temporary retirement from Egypt of Arábi Pasha, with the maintenance of his rank and pay. 2. The retirement into the interior of Egypt of Ali Pasha Fehmi and Abdul-Al Pasha, who will also retain their rank and pay. 3. The resignation of the present Ministry."

The Note added that "the intervention of the two Powers, being divested of all character of vengeance and reprisal, they will use their good offices to obtain from the Khedive a general amnesty, and will watch over its strict observance."

In consequence of the delivery of this Note, the Ministers resigned on May 26. At the same time, they addressed a letter to the Khedive stating that as His Highness had accepted the conditions proposed by the two Powers, he had acquiesced in foreign intervention in contradiction to the terms of the Firmans. The Khedive replied that he accepted the resignation of the Ministry because it was the will of the nation, and that, as regards the rest, it was a matter between him and the Sultan, whose rights he would always respect.

For a moment, there appeared some hope that the crisis was over. Sir Edward Malet reported (May 27) that the Ministers "perceived that, were they to reject the conditions which the Khedive had accepted, they would be in overt, instead of covert rebellion, a position from which they shrank. The retirement of the Ministry was, therefore, due to the decisive and firm attitude assumed by His Highness." The French Government were elated. They now answered the proposal made by Lord Granville on May 24, to the effect that the Powers should be addressed with a view to Turkish troops being held in readiness to proceed to Egypt. M. Tissot, the French representative in London, wrote to Lord Granville in the following terms: "M. de Freycinet telegraphs to me that the Council of

Ministers, to whom he has submitted your proposal, have been unanimous in thinking that nothing in the present situation of affairs would justify an appeal to Turkish troops. A Note was delivered by our Consuls-General on the 25th instant; the Ministry has just tendered its resignation, the elements of resistance are manifestly in process of disorganisation; there is, therefore, every motive for awaiting the course of events. It appears impossible to M. de Freycinet that you should not be struck with the justice of these considerations, and that, taking into account the recent events which have taken place at Cairo, you should not, yourself, my dear Lord, recognise the uselessness of the step which you at first proposed to him."

This elation was short-lived. On May 27, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed that Chérif Pasha had been asked to form a Ministry, but had refused to do so, "on the ground that no Government was possible so long as the military chiefs remained in the country." The Khedive, Sir Edward Malet added, "will now endeavour to form another Ministry, although he has faint hope of being able to get an efficient one, if he can form one at all." Sir Edward Malet urged that the Sultan should be called upon to exercise his authority, and especially that he should despatch an officer to Egypt with as little delay as possible. The Khedive also thought that "a Turkish Commissioner could make himself heard and restore tranquillity." Toulba Pasha, one of Arábi's principal associates, had an interview with the Khedive, at which "he stated that the army absolutely rejected the Joint Note and awaited the decision of the Porte, which was the only authority they recognised." There was, in fact, little doubt that the Ministers were acting in collusion with the Porte.

On May 28, the Grand Vizier telegraphed to the Khedive stating that a Turkish Commissioner would be sent if an official request to that effect were made. The Khedive asked the British and French Consuls-General what he was to do. His position was, indeed, one of the utmost difficulty. The officers of the regiments and of the Police force stationed at Alexandria had telegraphed to him on the previous day (May 27) that "they would not accept the resignation of Arábi Pasha, and that they allowed twelve hours to His Highness to consider, after which delay they would no longer be responsible for public tranquillity." Moreover, Sultan Pasha and other deputies told the Khedive in the presence of the British and French Consuls-General, that "unless he agreed to reinstate Arábi as Minister of War, his life was not safe." Nevertheless, Sir Edward Malet reported, "His Highness refused." As regards the request for a Turkish Commissioner, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed: "I stated that, if His Highness's life were in danger, I could not give any advice against the step he proposed, if it appeared to be the only chance of safety. M. Sienkiewicz limited himself to saying 'that he would request instructions from the French Government,' and we left without giving any further answer, although the Khedive urged the necessity of immediately making some reply to the Grand Vizier." Well might Sir Edward Malet say: "The position of the Khedive is a most painful one. Threatened with death, prevented by us from going to Alexandria while there was yet time,[1] and not allowed to appeal to the only quarter from which effectual assistance can come, he must feel bitterly the apparent result at present of following our advice and relying upon our support." The necessity for action was, indeed, so apparent that Lord Granville, without waiting to consult the French Government, telegraphed both to Lord Dufferin at Constantinople and to the Ambassadors at the other courts of Europe that "Her Majesty's Government considered it most desirable that no time should be lost by the Sultan, who should send an order to support the Khedive, to reject the accusation of the fallen Ministry with regard to His Highness, and to order the three military chiefs, and perhaps also the ex-President of the Council, to come and explain their conduct at Constantinople." M. de Freycinet, when he was informed of what had been done, sent similar instructions to the French representatives abroad, but he evidently did so with reluctance.

---

[1] The Khedive had, a short while previously, wished to go to Alexandria, but he was urged by the British and French Governments to remain at Cairo.

In the meanwhile, Cairo and Egypt generally remained in the hands of the military party. On May 29, Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour (afterwards Lord Alcester), who commanded the British fleet, which had by this time arrived at Alexandria, telegraphed: "Alexandria is apparently controlled this morning by the military party." It was clear that, in the absence of any effective help from without, the Khedive would be obliged to yield to the wishes of the mutinous army. On May 28, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed to Lord Granville in the following terms: "This afternoon, the Chiefs of religion, including the Patriarch, and the Chief Rabbi, all the deputies, Ulema and others, waited on the Khedive, and asked him to reinstate Arábi as Minister of War. He refused; but they besought him, saying that, though he might be ready to sacrifice his own life, he ought not to sacrifice theirs, and that Arábi had threatened them all with death if they did not obtain his consent. The Colonel of the Khedive's Guard stated that the guard of the Palace had been doubled, that orders had been given to them to prevent his leaving the Palace for his usual drive, and to fire if he attempted to force his way. Under these circumstances, the Khedive yielded, not to save himself, but to preserve the town from bloodshed." At the same time, the Khedive made a formal demand to the Sultan that a Commissioner should be sent to Egypt.

The situation at the end of May was, therefore, as follows: An attempt had been made to free the Khedive from the dictatorship of the military party. In spite of the support accorded by the British and French Governments, the attempt had completely failed. Arábi and his associates had again triumphed. British diplomacy, although somewhat more free in action than previous to the accession to power of M. de Freycinet, was still hampered by its association with France. No frank appeal could be made to the Sultan that he should exercise his authority, although both Lord Granville and Sir Edward Malet saw that in such an appeal lay the only chance of avoiding military intervention of some sort. M. de Freycinet was almost as much opposed as his predecessor to Turkish intervention. The result of all this vacillation was that the policy of England and France was suspected on all sides, — by the Sultan, who was greatly irritated; by the other Powers; and by the Egyptians. The Khedive, in the meanwhile, had so far found that Anglo-French support was a weak reed on which to lean in time of necessity.

The end, however, was not far off. It was daily becoming more clear that Arábi could be suppressed by nothing but force. If no one else would use the requisite force, the task would necessarily devolve on England.

## APPENDIX

### *Note on the relations between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt.*

The overestimate of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's influence was in no small degree due to the fact that he was known to be in communication with Mr. Gladstone. As Mr. Blunt in his *Secret History* has narrated at length his dealings with Mr. Gladstone, who, he says (p. 369), was, in his opinion, "capable of any treachery and any crime," I think that, in justice to the memory of that distinguished statesman, I should furnish whatever evidence is in my possession as to the manner in which he regarded the question of his relations with Mr. Blunt. At a later period of Egyptian history (October 23, 1883), Lord Granville wrote to me privately, forwarding a letter addressed by Mr. Blunt to Sir Edward Hamilton, Mr. Gladstone's Private Secretary, with the following remarks:

> Gladstone sent me this letter, condemning Blunt, but suggesting that I might send it on to you.
>
> I declined, and expressed a hope that Hamilton would not answer him at all; that there was no knowing what use he might make of the fact of his being in correspondence with any one in Downing Street.
>
> But as Gladstone returns to the charge, I forward it to you privately.
>
> He writes:
>
> "There are certain parts of Blunt's letter which, indifferently as I think of him, I certainly should have wished Baring to see. My rule has always been to look in the declarations of even the extremest opponents for anything which either may have some small percentage of truth in it, or ought not to be let pass without contradiction (private in this case). I know not how it is that he writes to Hamilton, but you see it is personal and *tutoyant*, not official."
>
> Gladstone's principle is plausible, but I fancy it often gets him into unnecessary difficulties.
>
> You have seen Blunt, and heard all he had to say.

I replied on November 5, in the following terms:

> I would just as soon that Mr. Blunt was not in correspondence with any one connected with the Government; if it were known, it might be misinterpreted.

The principle of not neglecting criticisms which come from an opponent is a very sound one, and I always endeavour to follow it. But, in this case, we may have the advantage of knowing what Blunt has to say without corresponding with him. He will not hide his light under a bushel. You may feel sure that before long it will burn brightly in the pages of some magazine.

I also, for Mr. Gladstone's information, replied at some length to Mr. Blunt's criticisms, but neither his letter, nor my reply, are of sufficient importance or interest to warrant their reproduction.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE BOMBARDMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

### May–July 1882

State of the country—Vacillation of the Porte—A Conference proposed—Dervish Pasha and Essad Effendi sent to Egypt—The Alexandria massacres—Failure of Dervish Pasha's Mission—Panic in Egypt—The Conference meets—The Ragheb Ministry—The British Admiral demands that the construction of batteries at Alexandria shall cease—The French decline to co-operate—The bombardment of Alexandria—The town abandoned and burnt.

Arábi's reinstatement was "looked upon by the natives as a sign that the Christians were going to be expelled from Egypt, that they were to recover the land bought by Europeans or mortgaged to them, and that the National Debt would be cancelled." Great numbers of Christians left the interior. The British residents at Alexandria called upon their Government to provide means for the protection of their lives. "Every day's delay," Sir Charles Cookson telegraphed on May 30, "increases the dangerous temper of the soldiery, and their growing defiance of discipline." The officers of the army were "obtaining by threats signatures to a petition praying for the deposition of the Khedive." The President of the Chamber requested the deputies to go to their homes "in order to save them from being compelled to sign the petition." Official business, except at the Ministry of War, was at a standstill. The whole country was in a state of panic. Sir Edward Malet warned the

British Government (May 31) that "a collision might at any moment occur between the Moslems and the Christians."

It was abundantly clear by this time that the question of protecting European financial interests in Egypt had fallen completely into the background. It was also clear that the national movement was entirely under the control of the military party. Foreign intervention of some sort had become necessary.

For years past, the Ottoman Government had been longing to regain their hold over Egypt. The chanceries of Europe were filled with notes and protests embodying the querulous complaints made by the Porte against the intervention of the European Powers in Egyptian affairs, and against the insufficient recognition accorded to the sovereign rights of the Sultan. The Turkish opportunity had at last come. The force of circumstances had fought in favour of Turkish pretensions. The Khedive and the two Western Powers had endeavoured to settle the affairs of Egypt independently of the Sultan. They had signally failed in the attempt. All the Powers of Europe, with the exception of France, were in favour of employing the authority of the Sultan as the executive arm by which order should be restored in Egypt. Even French opposition was much modified. The *République Française*, indeed, which was inspired by M. Gambetta, strongly opposed any idea of Turkish intervention. "Il faut maintenir," it said on May 31, "l'indépendance de l'Égypte, en interdire l'approche aux Commissaires aussi bien qu'aux troupes du Sultan." But M. Gambetta was no longer in office. "Je ne m'expliquerai point à la tribune," M. de Freycinet said in the French Chamber on June 1, "sur les divers moyens auxquels on pourrait être conduit, mais il y a un moyen que j'exclus;

ce moyen c'est une intervention militaire Française en Égypte." This declaration, which produced an explosion of indignation from M. Gambetta, was almost tantamount to publicly admitting the possibility of Turkish intervention.

It is one of the peculiarities of the vacillating and tortuous policy invariably pursued by the Porte that Turkish statesmen are rarely able to seize the favourable moment for action in support of their most cherished views. The Khedive had asked for the despatch of a Turkish Commissioner to Egypt. The British and French Governments viewed the proposal more or less favourably. It might reasonably have been supposed that the Sultan would seize with avidity the opportunity for asserting his sovereign rights which was thus afforded him. He did nothing of the kind. He was inclined to show his resentment at the way in which he had been enjoined not to intervene at the commencement of the Egyptian troubles, by refusing to act at the instance of England and France when they were favourably disposed towards his intervention. A suggestion was ostentatiously promulgated that the withdrawal of the allied fleet from Alexandria must be a preliminary condition to the despatch of a Turkish Commissioner. The Sultan had yet to learn that his assistance, though desirable, was not indispensable.

In the meanwhile, M. de Freycinet, under the pressure of circumstances, had in some degree overcome his objections to international action. On May 30, he telegraphed to M. Tissot that "there could no longer be any reasonable hope of a pacific solution through the moral influence of the French and English squadrons, and the good offices of the two agents at Cairo." He therefore proposed to Lord Granville that a Conference should be summoned. Lord Granville at once intimated his concurrence in this proposal, which was well received by the other Powers. Prince Bismarck thought the idea of a Conference "a very good expedient for covering the change of policy on the part of the French Government in regard to the admissibility of Turkish intervention." The Sultan was pressed to join the Conference. "I expressed my hope," Lord Granville wrote on June 2, "that Musurus Pasha would represent to his Government the expediency of acting in cordial co-operation with England. I remarked that if the Sultan were to make difficulties and raise obstacles, it would be difficult to find arguments to meet the pressure that would be put upon us to take immediate and independent action in consideration of the pressing nature of the circumstances and engagements under which we lay."

The idea of assembling a Conference was distasteful to the Sultan, and the proposal was sufficient to overcome his hesitation about the despatch of a Turkish Commissioner to Egypt. Dervish Pasha left Constantinople for Alexandria on June 4. The Porte "confidently hoped that the mission of Dervish Pasha would suffice to restore the normal situation in Egypt to the general satisfaction," and Musurus Pasha was instructed to express to Lord Granville a hope that the project of the Conference would be abandoned. He was told in reply that if it were found that there were good hopes of a settlement being speedily attained by the unassisted efforts of Dervish Pasha, there would be no objection to the Conference adjourning for a short time in order that the result of his mission might be watched.

Any beneficial results, which might possibly have accrued from the despatch of the Turkish mission to Egypt, were frustrated by the conditions under which it was sent. It would have been contrary to the traditions and to the existing practice of Turkish diplomacy to have selected one capable Commissioner, in whom confidence might be reposed, and to have traced clear and straightforward instructions for his guidance. Whilst Dervish Pasha was to act on lines friendly to the Khedive and hostile to Arábi, his colleague, Essad Effendi, was to be guided by diametrically opposite principles. He was to hold out the hand of fellowship to the mutineers. Moreover, in order to guard against the possibilityof common action on the part of the two Commissioners, each of them was to communicate independently with the Sultan. The end to be obtained by each of the Commissioners was, indeed, identical, though the method of attaining it was more explicitly set forth in Dervish Pasha's instructions than in those of Essad Effendi. The latter was merely told that the principal object he should bear in mind was to "faire échouer les entreprises et intrigues pernicieuses des étrangers." Dervish Pasha, on the other hand, was told that "in order to create a rivalry amongst the Consuls, he was to attach himself to the Consuls of Germany, Austria, and Italy, by pretending to invite them to decisive deliberations, and to promise to take their advice."

Save in respect to this point of principle, the instructions given to each of the two Commissioners differed widely.[1] Dervish Pasha was ordered, if necessary, to arrest Arábi and his principal followers and to send them to Constantinople, to abolish the Chamber of Notables, to curtail the powers of the Khedive, to extend those of the Sultan, and, lastly, to call for troops if necessary.

---

[1] The instructions to each Commissioner were, of course, secret. But there can be no doubt of the accuracy of the facts here stated in connection with them. See also the testimony of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, who was probably well-informed on the point under discussion.—*Secret History, etc.*, p. 305.

Essad Effendi, on the other hand, was instructed to thank the "Notables et hommes de marque de l'Égypte pour le dévouement dont ils ont fait preuve," and to assure every one that the Sultan had no intention of curtailing the powers granted to the Khedive by the Firmans. "Quant à l'envoi d'une force armée," it was added, "ce n'est qu'une invention pernicieuse et malveillante." It was, in fact, certain that the Sultan was reluctant to bring his troops into collision with the population of Egypt. He preferred to pose as their defender against European aggression. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the bewildered Essad Effendi should, shortly after his arrival at Cairo, have reported that the policy of Dervish Pasha was in entire contradiction to the instructions he had himself received. He asked, but asked in vain, for some clear indication of what he was to do.

Dervish Pasha, however, lost no time in acting on his instructions. He resolved to assert his authority. On June 10, he received a deputation from the Ulema of Cairo. "One of them," Sir Edward Malet reported, "well known as a follower of Arábi, proceeded to deliver a speech, extolling the course pursued by the army in having preserved the country from falling into the hands of infidels. Upon this, the Commissioner rose from his seat, and, in forcible language, reminded those present that he had come to issue orders and not to listen to preaching. The offending Alim was thereupon seized and forced to retire by an attendant of colossal stature who appears always at hand."

It was, to say the least, a curious coincidence that at the moment when it appeared possible that the rulership of Egypt would slip from the hands of the military clique, which then exercised supreme power, an incident should have occurred which showed that without the aid of Arábi and his colleagues public tranquillity could not be preserved. For some while past, the population of Alexandria had shown unusual signs of effervescence. Europeans had been hustled and spat upon in the streets. A Sheikh had been crying aloud in the public thoroughfares, "O Moslems, come and help me to kill the Christians!" On June 9, a Greek was warned by an Egyptian to "take care, as the Arabs were going to kill the Christians either that day or the day following." On the 10th, some low-class Moslems went about the streets calling out that "the last day for the Christians was drawing nigh."[1] On June 11, the storm burst. It is needless to give the details of the riot which took place on that day. It will be sufficient to say that disturbances broke out simultaneously in three places. Some fifty Europeans were slaughtered in cold blood under circumstances of the utmost brutality. Many others, amongst whom was Sir Charles Cookson, the British Consul, were severely wounded and narrowly escaped with their lives. "Whenever a European appeared in sight, the mob cried out 'O Moslems! Kill him! Kill the Christian!'"

Both the Khedive and Arábi have at times been accused of having instigated the Alexandria massacres.[2] So calm and impartial an observer

[1] Royle's *Egyptian Campaigns of* 1882 *to* 1885, vol. i. p. 88.

[2] Mr. Wilfrid Blunt (*Secret History,* pp. 497-534) gives at great length the evidence on which he relies to incriminate the Khedive. After a careful examination of all the facts, I have come to the conclusion that this evidence is altogether valueless. It is unnecessary that I should give my reasons at length.

Lord Randolph Churchill made himself the principal mouthpiece in Parliament of the charges against the Khedive. Papers on the subject were laid before Parliament (see *Egypt,* No. 4, 1884). They were forwarded to Sir Edward Malet on August 6, 1883, by Lord Granville with the following remarks: "A full examination of the papers and arguments adduced by Lord Randolph Churchill leads to the conclusion as Sir Edward Malet, however, held that both accusations were devoid of foundation, and that the massacres were the natural outcome of the political effervescence of the time. There can be little doubt that this view of the question is correct. A considerable moral responsibility, however, rested on Arábi and his colleagues for the blood which was shed. For a long time past, they had done their best to arouse the race hatred and fanaticism of the cowardly mob at Alexandria.[1] The natural result ensued.

The effect of the riot was instantaneous. Sir Edward Malet reported to Lord Granville, on June 13, that Dervish Pasha's mission had altogether failed in its object. The Sultan's Commissioner was obliged to bow to the authority of Arábi. He informed the representatives of the Powers that "under the urgent circumstances of the case, he would assume joint responsibility with Arábi Pasha for the execution of the orders of the Khedive." Dervish Pasha distributed decorations alike to the Arábists and to the Khedivial party, but his influence was gone. None of the officers of the army went to see him. It was only by "a remnant of politeness" that Arábi answered the letters which Dervish Pasha addressed to him.

It was about this moment that the Sultan informed Lord Dufferin that "Arábi Pasha had made a complete submission, and that the *status quo* was about to be established." Musurus Pasha also told Lord Granville that the Sultan had conferred on Arábi the Grand Cordon of the

---

that no *prima facie* evidence (either legal or moral) exists in support of the charges which have been preferred against His Highness Tewfik Pasha."

As regards Arábi, Sir Charles Wilson, who watched his trial, expressed the opinion that "there was no evidence to connect Arábi with the massacre at Alexandria on June 11."

[1] Abundant evidence in support of this statement was adduced at Arábi's trial.

Medjidieh, and that Arábi "had expressed his gratitude and had reiterated his assurances of fidelity and devotion to the Sultan." His Majesty thought that there was "no longer occasion for anxiety." The alarm which had prevailed had been due to insubordination on the part of the military, but these acts of submission and the restoration of tranquillity "removed all difficulties and rendered any measures of rigour useless." The extent of Arábi's submission may be gathered from the fact that, on July 5, Arábi "intimated to Dervish Pasha that he had better quit Egypt," and that when, on July 8, he was summoned, through Essad Effendi, to proceed to Constantinople "he refused to comply with the invitation of His Majesty." Then, at last, Lord Dufferin extorted from the unwilling Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Porte the admission that "Arábi had taken the bit in his teeth and that it was evident something must be done."

Manifestly something had to be done, for the whole framework of society in Egypt was on the point of collapsing. By June 17, 14,000 Christians had left the country, and some 6000 more were anxiously awaiting the arrival of ships to take them away. On June 26, ten Greeks and three Jews were murdered by a fanatical mob at Benha. Arábi, following perhaps unconsciously the example of the French Jacobins, proposed to the Council that the property of all Egyptians leaving the country should be confiscated.[1] On June 29, Mr. Cartwright, Sir Edward Malet's *locum tenens*,[2] reported to Lord Granville: "The exodus of Europeans and the preparations for flight continue with vigour. . . . It is impossible to conceive the collapse and ruin which have so suddenly overtaken the country. . . . The natives, even the religious Sheikhs, are now raising their voices against the military party, and a large number of respectable Arabs are leaving the country. The departure of Turkish families is taking large proportions."

---

[1] It is possible that Arábi designedly copied the proceedings of the Jacobins. I have been informed on good authority that at this period he devoted a good deal of attention to the literature of the French Revolution.

[2] Ill-health obliged Sir Edward Malet to leave Egypt at this time. He subsequently came to the conclusion that the sudden illness by which he was prostrated was the result of a plot to poison him.—See his letter in the *Times* of October 12, 1907.

The effect of the massacre at Alexandria was to quicken the slow pace of European diplomacy. M. de Freycinet thought it "more than ever imperative that the Conference should be constituted without the least delay." On June 13, the British and French Governments instructed their representatives at the various courts of Europe to propose that "the Sultan, as Sovereign, shall, in case of necessity, be jointly invited by the Powers united in Conference to be prepared to lend to the Khedive a sufficient force to enable His Highness to maintain his authority; the Sultan to be requested to give a positive assurance that these troops should only be used for the maintenance of the *status quo*, and that there should be no interference with the liberties of Egypt secured by the previous Firmans of the Sultan, or with existing European agreements; the troops not to remain in Egypt for a longer period than a month, except at the request of the Khedive, and with the consent of the Great Powers, or of the Western Powers as representing Europe; the reasonable expenses of the expedition to be borne by the Egyptian Government." This was quickly followed by a proposal that the Conference should meet immediately "with or without Turkey." The Sultan declined to join the Conference. He thought it unnecessary, as "Dervish Pasha was succeeding in his efforts to fulfil his mission in

Egypt." The result was that, after some diplomatic skirmishing, the Conference met at Constantinople on June 23 without the Porte being represented.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the tedious proceedings of the Conference. It was clear, as Lord Salisbury said in the House of Lords on July 24, that the "European concert was rather a phantasm." On the one side, was the British Government, represented at the Conference by one of the most able diplomatists of the day. Lord Granville and Lord Dufferin thoroughly understood what they wanted. They wished for order to be maintained in Egypt, and they were alive to the fact that, without the employment of material force, order could not be maintained. European public opinion had been irritated by the "tortuous and occult devices" of the Sultan. If the Sultan refused to send troops, it would be necessary to "resort to an armed occupation of Egypt other than through the instrumentality of Turkey." On the other side, were the various Powers of Europe, watchful of their own interests, but unwilling to incur any responsibility. On June 30, Lord Dufferin reported that so far the Conference had "done absolutely nothing," and that, unless something could speedily be settled, "the prolongation of its existence would seem useless." By July 2, the Conference had only got so far as to consider "the object to be attained by the armed Turkish intervention in Egypt," and the united Ambassadors had come to the sage but somewhat impotent conclusion that, if the Porte refused an invitation to send troops, "the Conference reserved the right to express an opinion as to what should be done at the opportune moment."

In the meanwhile, the bewildered ruler, whose battalions it was proposed to use in order to keep the peace, held aloof from the Council Chamber, being at times willing and at times unwilling to act. He wished to know what Lord Granville meant when he referred to "the safe improvement of the internal administration of Egypt." He was anxious to have some explanations on this point, for his suspicions had been excited by the fact that the Conference had been invited to consider how "the prudent development of Egyptian institutions" might best be effected. "What," Lord Dufferin reported, "has excited His Majesty's mistrust, is evidently the allusion to Parliamentary Government, which he imagines to be shadowed forth in the word 'institutions.'"

Eventually, on July 6, the Conference got so far as to invite the Sultan to send troops under certain conditions, which were specified in general terms, and which, in the event of the invitation being accepted, were to be embodied in a subsequent agreement between the six Powers and Turkey.

Whilst these discussions were taking place, matters had been going from bad to worse in Egypt. On June 26, Mr. Cartwright wrote: "The exclusive influence of Arábi Pasha is best shown by the unbroken ascendancy, the intolerable pretensions, and the threatening attitude of the army." A mock inquiry was instituted into the massacres of June 11, but the English member of the Commission soon withdrew from the proceedings, and the Minister of War told the Khedive's private secretary that "he would not allow any Arab to be executed, unless for every Arab, a European was hung." No one dared to give evidence which might be distasteful to the military party.

The Austrian and German representatives in Egypt urged the formation of a Ministry approved by the military party. Prince Bismarck thought that Arábi had become a power "avec lequel il fallait compter."

The German and Austrian proposals were not viewed with disfavour in Paris. M. de Freycinet spoke about "the possibility of patching up the Egyptian question by making terms with Arábi," but was at once met with the decisive statement that, in the opinion of the British Government, no "satisfactory or durable arrangement was possible without the overthrow of Arábi Pasha and the military party in Egypt."

Under the pressure exerted by the Austrian and German Consuls-General, the Khedive, on June 7, nominated Ragheb Pasha, an effete old man, to be President of the Council, with Arábi as his Minister of War. The result was what might have been expected. On June 28, Mr. Cartwright reported to Lord Granville: "Ragheb Pasha meets with great difficulties in his endeavour to control the military element in his Ministry. I hear that His Excellency is greatly disheartened at his want of success, and finds the officers too much occupied with warlike designs and preparations to pay any serious attention to reassuring measures, or to the need of serious steps with a view to the establishment of order and a more normal state of affairs."

For some while past, both British public opinion and the British Government had shown a disposition to break through the diplomatic cobwebs which were hindering all effective action and allowing Arábi to defy Europe. The opportunity for doing so now presented itself. So early as June 3, the Admiralty was informed that batteries were being raised at Alexandria with the intention of using them against the British fleet. The Sultan gave orders that the construction of these batteries should cease, and for the time being his order was obeyed. A month later, the works were recommenced. The garrison of Alexandria was reinforced. Arábi urged upon his colleagues the desirability of a *levée en masse.* On July 5, Mr. Cartwright reported: "At a Council of Ministers held yesterday, Arábi Pasha made a very violent speech against the Sultan. He has, moreover, ordered the officers of the Egyptian army to discontinue all communication with Dervish Pasha, who is to be told that his mission in Egypt is terminated." On July 3, Lord Alcester was instructed to prevent the continuance of work on the fortifications. If not immediately discontinued, he was to "destroy the earthworks and silence the batteries if they opened fire." The French Government were informed of the issue of these instructions and invited to co-operate. The other Powers of Europe were also informed. On July 5, M. de Freycinet told Lord Lyons that "the French Government could not instruct Admiral Conrad to associate himself with the English Admiral in stopping by force the erection of batteries or the placing of guns at Alexandria. The French Government considered that this would be an act of offensive hostility against Egypt, in which they could not take part without violating the constitution, which prohibits their making war without the consent of the Chamber." On July 6, M. de Freycinet, in answer to a question addressed to him by M. Lockroy in the Chamber of Deputies, "repeated emphatically the assurance that the arms of France would not be used without the express consent of the Chamber." On July 6, Lord Alcester sent a note to the commandant of the garrison demanding that the work of fortification and the erection of earthworks should be discontinued. He was informed in reply that no guns had recently been added to the forts, or military preparations made. The truth of this statement was confirmed by Dervish Pasha. On the 9th, however, work on the fortifications recommenced. Guns were mounted on Fort Silsileh. At daybreak on July 10, Lord Alcester gave notice to the Consuls resident at Alexandria that he would "commence action twenty-four hours after, unless the forts on the isthmus and those commanding the entrance to the harbour were surrendered." The different Cabinets of Europe were informed of this step.

The views of the Austrian Government on a matter of this sort are of special importance, on account of the interest possessed by Austria in any step which menaces the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. When Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador at Vienna, informed Count Kalnoky of the measures about to be taken by the British Admiral, "His Excellency replied without hesitation that he thought Her Majesty's Government perfectly right in the step that was being taken, and nothing could be more complete and cordial than the manner in which he declared the action to be perfectly legitimate, as it was impossible for us to permit the threatening preparations to be carried on without interference."

The bewilderment of the Sultan was at this moment extreme. Baron de Ring, who had been formerly French Consul-General in Egypt and whose Arábist sympathies were well known, was at Constantinople, and had given the Sultan to understand that France would be glad to see some compromise effected with Arábi's party. Under these circumstances, the Sultan was inclined to join the Conference. Indeed, on July 10, he informed the German Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople that "a Turkish Commissioner would join the Conference the next day but one." It was, however, clear that the work of restoring order in Egypt was about to be taken out of the hands of the Conference. When, on July 10, the Sultan was informed of the intended bombardment of Alexandria, he told Lord Dufferin that he "would send a categorical answer to his communication by five o'clock to-morrow (July 11)." In the meanwhile, he asked that the bombardment should be delayed, and he appointed a new Prime Minister, who at once called on Lord Dufferin and said that "to-morrow (the 12th) he would be able to propose a satisfactory solution of the Egyptian question." Lord Dufferin forwarded the Sultan's request to London and to Alexandria, but he "held out no hope that the line of action determined upon would be modified." He also pointed out "the folly, when such great interests were at stake, of postponing diplomatic action till it became materially impossible to interfere with the course of events."

The Sultan was, as usual, too late. The patience both of the British Government and of the British public was exhausted. For the last year and a half, every one had been agreed that something should be done, but no one could agree as to what should be done. At last, something effectual was done. "At 7 A.M., on the 11th," Lord Alcester stated in his report on the bombardment, "I signalled from the *Invincible* to the *Alexandra* to fire a shell into the recently armed earthworks termed the Hospital Battery, and followed this by a general signal to the fleet 'Attack the enemy's batteries,' when immediate action ensued between all the ships in the positions assigned to them, and the whole of the forts commanding the entrance to the harbour of Alexandria." By 5.30 P.M., the batteries were silenced. On the afternoon of the following day, the Egyptian garrison retreated, having first set fire to the town, which was pillaged by the mob. Several Europeans were murdered. On the evening of the 13th, 150 marines, with a Gatling gun, were landed from the fleet, but re-embarked after remaining on shore for about half an hour. On the morning of the 14th, a further force was landed. In the course of the next day or two, reinforcements having arrived, effective possession was taken of the town and something like order restored. On July 18, Europeans and Egyptians began to return to Alexandria.

It has been frequently stated by critics hostile to England that Alexandria was set on fire by the shells from the British fleet. For this statement there is not a shadow of foundation.[1] There is no doubt that the conflagration was the deliberate work of incendiaries.

---

[1] Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's testimony on Egyptian affairs generally is of very little value, but it may perhaps be quoted on this special point. His first impressions are recorded in the following words (*Secret History, etc.*, p. 372): "July 14th. Went to see Gregory. He is frightened at Alexandria's being burnt, and will have it that Arábi did not order it. I say he ordered it, and was right to do so. This is the policy of the Russians at Moscow, and squares with all I know of their intentions." Somewhat later, Mr. Blunt wrote (pp. 390-91): "With regard to the burning of Alexandria, I have never been able to make up my mind exactly what part, if any, the Egyptian army took in it. Arábi has always persistently denied having ordered it, and an act of such great energy stands so completely at variance with the rest of his all-too supine conduct of the war that I think it may be fairly dismissed as improbable. . . . Ninet, who was present at the whole affair, attributes the conflagration primarily to Seymour's shells, and this is probably a correct account. . . . I do not consider the question of any great importance as affecting the moral aspect of the case, it being clearly a military measure. . . . Historically, however, it is of importance, and I therefore say that on a balance of evidence I am of opinion that the retreating army had its share in it, not in consequence of any order, but as an act of disorder."

Mr. Broadley, who defended Arábi at his trial, evidently had strong suspicions that the burning of Alexandria was his handiwork. On November 27, 1882, he wrote to Mr. Blunt: "*Nothing* presents difficulties but the burning of Alexandria. As regards this, I believe the proof will fail as to Arábi's orders, but many ugly facts remain, viz.: (1) No efforts to stop conflagration and loot. (2) Continued intimacy with Suliman Sami *afterwards*. (3) No punishment of offenders. (4) Large purchases of petroleum. (5) Systematic manner of incendiarism by soldiers. This is *the rub*. Could Arábi have not stopped the whole thing? Besides, some of his speeches have a very burning appearance."—*Secret History, etc.*, p. 468.

At the time, the British Government were severely blamed for not taking prompt measures immediately after the bombardment to stop the conflagration and to restore order in the town. So early as July 7, the Khedive pointed out that the bombardment should be immediately followed by the landing of a military force. The War Office and the Admiralty were desirous to land troops, but their advice was overruled by the Cabinet on political grounds. Mr. Gladstone stated in the House of Commons that the landing of a force was objectionable, because it would have involved "the assumption of authority upon the Egyptian question," and would have been "grossly disloyal in the face of Europe and the Conference." It is difficult to conceive the frame of mind of any one who considers that firing several thousand shot and shell into Egyptian forts did not involve an "assumption of authority," whereas landing some men to prevent a populous city from being burnt to the ground did involve such an assumption. These technicalities, which are only worthy of a special pleader, were the bane of the British Government in dealing with the Egyptian question during Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. No foreign Power would have had any reasonable ground for complaint if, immediately after the bombardment, a force sufficient to preserve order had been landed at Alexandria.

The question remains whether, apart from the details in the execution, the bombardment was justifiable. There can be no doubt that it was perfectly justifiable, not merely on the narrow ground taken up by the British Ministry, namely, that it was necessary as a means of self-defence, but because it was clear that, in the absence of effectual Turkish or international action, the duty of crushing Arábi devolved on England.[1]

---

[1] The bombardment of Alexandria led to the retirement from Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of Mr. Bright, " the colleague who in fundamentals stood closest to him of them all" (Morley's *Life of Gladstone,* iii. p. 83). The arguments by which Mr. Gladstone defended the action taken at Alexandria are given in a letter addressed at the time to Mr. Bright (p. 84). Save to those who hold that, under no circumstances is the use of force justifiable, they would appear to be conclusive.

# CHAPTER XVII

## TEL-EL-KEBIR

July–September 1882

State of the country—British policy—Vote of credit—Negotiations with France—Fall of the Freycinet Ministry—France declines to co-operate—Negotiations with Italy—Italy declines to co-operate—Negotiations with Turkey—Tel-el-Kebir—General remarks.

After the bombardment of the forts, Arábi retired to Kafr-Dawar, a few miles distant from Alexandria, whence he issued a Proclamation stating that "irreconcilable war existed between the Egyptians and the English, and all those who proved traitors to their country would not only be subjected to the severest punishment in accordance with martial law, but would be for ever accursed in the future world." On July 22, the Khedive formally dismissed Arábi from the post of Minister of War, but it was not till August 27, that a new Ministry under the presidency of Chérif Pasha, with Riaz Pasha as Minister of the Interior, was formed at Alexandria. In the meanwhile, the condition of the provinces was one of complete anarchy. The towns of Tanta, Damanhour, and Mehalla were plundered, and the European inhabitants massacred.

The history of the next two months may be summarised in a single sentence. England stepped in, and with one rapid and well-delivered blow crushed the rebellion. But it will be interesting to the student of diplomatic history to know in somewhat greater detail how it was that the British Government were left to act alone in the matter.

After the bombardment of Alexandria, British public opinion was thoroughly roused. On July 22, Mr. Gladstone stated the policy of the British Government in the House of Commons. "We feel," he said, "that we should not fully discharge our duty if we did not endeavour to convert the present interior state of Egypt from anarchy and conflict to peace and order. We shall look during the time that remains to us to the co-operation of the Powers of civilised Europe, if it be in any case open to us." But, Mr. Gladstone added, amidst the cheers of the House, "if every chance of obtaining co-operation is exhausted, the work will be undertaken by the single power of England." Parliament granted, by a majority of 275 to 19, the money (£2,300,000) for which the Government asked. 15,000 men were ordered to Malta and Cyprus. A force of 5000 men was ordered to be sent to Egypt from India. Sir Garnet (afterwards Lord) Wolseley was placed in chief command. He was to go to Egypt "in support of the authority of His Highness the Khedive, as established by the Firmans of the Sultan and existing international engagements, to suppress a military revolt in that country."

Simultaneously with the military preparations, diplomatic negotiations were actively carried on. The French Government were "firmly resolved to separate the question of protecting the Suez Canal from that of intervention properly so-called." They would "abstain from any operation in the interior of Egypt except for the purpose of repelling direct acts of aggression. If, therefore, the English troops thought fit to undertake such operations, they must not count on French co-operation." Amongst other reasons for adopting this course, it was stated that the Ministers of War and Marine considered that the season was most unfavourable, and that at least half the troops would perish from sickness, if operations were undertaken before November. At the same time, the French Chargé d'Affaires in London told Lord Granville "that it was certain that M. de Freycinet wished it to be understood that the French Government had no objection to our (*i.e.* the British) advance if we decided to make it." M. de Freycinet, however, was not unwilling to take action in common with England for the defence of the Canal. On July 19, the French Chamber granted to the Government, by a majority of 421 to 61, the navy credits for which they asked, amounting to about £313,000. In the course of the debates on this vote, it became clear that much difference of opinion existed in the Chamber. M. Gambetta denounced in the strongest terms the despatch of Turkish troops to Egypt, and spoke eloquently in support of the Anglo-French alliance. "Au prix des plus grands sacrifices," he said, "ne rompez jamais l'alliance Anglaise. Et précisément — je livre toute ma pensée, car je n'ai rien à cacher—précisément ce qui me sollicite à l'alliance Anglaise, à la co-opération Anglaise, dans le bassin de la Méditerranée, et en Égypte, et ce que je redoute le plus, entendez-le bien, outre cette rupture néfaste, c'est que vous ne livriez à l'Angleterre et pour toujours, des territoires, des fleuves, et des passages où votre droit de vivre et de trafiquer est égal au sien."[1]

---

[1] To a limited extent, M. Gambetta was a true prophet, although time alone can show how far he was right in using the words *pour toujours*. In the meanwhile, it may be remarked that the "right to live and to trade" in Egypt has been as fully, indeed, perhaps somewhat more fully assured to the French since the British occupation than was the case before the occurrence of that event. According to a

M. Clémenceau, on the other hand, was animated with a very different spirit. He congratulated the Government on not having taken part in the bombardment of the forts at Alexandria, he approved of the Conference, and he deprecated any active French interference in Egypt. Speaking with a manifest suspicion of the policy and intentions of Germany, he said that it appeared to him that endeavours were being made to get the French forces scattered over Africa, and that, as Austria had been pushed into Bosnia and Herzegovina, so France had been pushed into Tunis, and was now being pushed into Egypt.

Active preparations were now made in the French dockyards. The French Admiral at Port Said was instructed to concert measures with Rear-Admiral Hoskins for the protection of the Suez Canal. But both the French Government and the French Chamber were haunted by the idea that France would be isolated in Europe. M. de Freycinet wished to have a distinct mandate from the Conference deputing England and France to watch over the Canal. The British and French Ambassadors at Constantinople were, therefore, instructed to propose to their colleagues that the Conference should designate the Powers who, failing any effective action on the part of Turkey, should be charged in case of need to take whatever measures were necessary for the protection of the Canal. It soon became apparent that it would be impossible to obtain a mandate from the Powers. Prince Bismarck "was afraid of giving the question greater proportions by such a step, and of converting it into a war between the Christian Powers of Europe and the Mohammedan countries." Count

---

statement published in the *Journal Officiel* in 1903, French capital to the extent of over 57 millions sterling was at that time invested in Egypt. I do not doubt that this amount has now been exceeded.

Münster, however, assured Lord Granville that, in the event of the British Government taking action on their own initiative, they would receive the moral support of Germany, although Prince Bismarck was not prepared to go to the length of a formal mandate. The Austrian Government shared the views set forth by Germany.

In the meanwhile, the feeling in France against any intervention in Egypt grew apace. The partisans of non-intervention and those of intervention united against the Suez Canal Credit Bill. The opposition was increased by a communication made by the German Ambassador in Paris to M. de Freycinet, which favoured Turkish intervention as the best means for safeguarding the Canal. This communication was regarded as one of many steps said to have been recently taken by Prince Bismarck with a view to keeping M. de Freycinet in office. Resentment at the interference in their internal affairs implied, as the French conceived, in the undisguised support Prince Bismarck was supposed to give to M. de Freycinet, had been rankling for some while in French minds. The suspicions entertained of Germany found expression in a report made by the Committee of the Chamber. Some members of the Committee thought "que l'intérêt de la France était de ne pas intervenir en Égypte et de ne point immobiliser dans une expédition lointaine une partie de nos forces militaires. Sans méconnaître que la politique de non-intervention avait ses périls, ils ont exposé que la politique d'intervention leur paraissait plus dangereuse encore dans la situation actuelle de l'Europe." M. Clémenceau, in the final debate on the Bill, expressed himself as follows: "Messieurs, la conclusion de ce qui se passe en ce moment est celle-ci: L'Europe est couverte de soldats, tout le monde attend, toutes les Puissances se réservent leur liberté pour l'avenir ; réservez la liberté d'action de la France." A division took place on July 29, with the result that the Government were defeated by a large majority, the numbers being 416 to 75. This vote brought about the fall of the Freycinet Ministry, and finally settled the question of French intervention in Egypt. A new Government was formed under the presidency of M. Duclerc, who, on August 8, informed the Chamber that "le Gouvernement s'inspirera de la pensée qui est dictée par ce vote et y conformera sa politique."

For the time being, the attitude of the French Government and people was dignified and friendly to England. There was, indeed, no reason for the display of any unfriendly feeling. Whether it was or was not wise that France should intervene actively in the affairs of Egypt, might be an open question. But one point was clear. The British Government had done all in their power to ensure French co-operation; their want of success in obtaining it was due to the action of the French Government and of the French people, speaking through their constitutional representatives. When, a little later, British military preparations were in a more advanced stage, M. Grévy, the President of the French Republic, told the British Chargé d'Affaires at Paris "that it was not only out of goodwill to England that he hoped for the prompt success of our arms, it was also in the interest of France. Pan-Islamism was a factor of great weight in the future ; and he considered it of the highest importance that there should be no doubt, even for a moment, that Musulman or Arab troops could not resist Europeans in the field. The action of the Chamber had prevented the French Government from giving practical proof of their desire for our success, but he could assure me (in spite of what some few might say to the contrary) that France wished well to England in this matter, and would sincerely rejoice at the success of her arms." The *Temps*, which was supposed to be the organ of the French Government, pointed out that, even if England established herself in Egypt, as France had done in Tunis, "la France y gagnerait autant qu'elle." The main point was to keep out the Turk. "Nous avons," the same newspaper said, "des intérêts de diverses sortes en Égypte : la liberté du Canal, le paiement de nos créanciers, la sécurité de ceux de nos nationaux qui habitent le pays—autant d'intérêts que ne menace aucunement l'Angleterre, mais nous avons, sur le Nil, un intérêt infiniment supérieur à ceux-là ; c'est que le Turc ne change pas sa domination nominale contre un pouvoir réel, c'est que la puissance Ottomane, au lieu d'y remporter un avantage, y reçoive un échec."

Immediately after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs congratulated the British Government on the victory, and "expressed his sincere hope for the prompt and complete success of the British forces in Egypt." "There was," M. Duclerc said a day or two later (September 15), "no doubt in France a certain general spirit of Chauvinism (which personally he did not share) which must have an outburst when fighting is going on anywhere without France being in it, and which was inclined to flare up at any moment. He trusted, however, that Her Majesty's Government knew the right value to attach to the outpourings of some portion of the Paris press. The sober good sense of France felt that the success of England against Arábi was also a solid gain to the rulers of Algeria."

In spite, however, of all this apparent cordiality, it was evident that there were rocks ahead The force of circumstances had unfortunately severed the *entente cordiale* between England and France. Internal dissension and mistrust of Germany had paralysed French action at a critical moment. But, whatever may have been the causes, the fact that the French had lost their former footing of equality in Egypt was not calculated to make them easier to deal with when the final arrangements to be adopted in the valley of the Nile came to be discussed. Signs of the coming estrangement were, indeed, already visible to observers behind the scenes.

Foiled in their endeavours to obtain the co-operation of the French, the British Government turned to Italy. Italian jealousy had been set ablaze at the prospect of British, and still more of Anglo-French, intervention in Egypt. The policy of England was attacked with virulence by the Italian press. The Anglo-French Control had, it was said, brought about the ruin of Egypt. A sedative was evidently required. On July 24, Sir Augustus Paget, the British Ambassador at Rome, was authorised "to join with his French colleague in the application to be made to the Italian Government to co-operate with England and France in the steps to be taken for the protection of the Suez Canal; and he was at the same time to express the great satisfaction of Her Majesty's Government should Italy agree to be associated with England in this important work." This was immediately (July 25) followed by a further instruction to Sir Augustus Paget to invite the co-operation of Italy without waiting for action on the part of the French Ambassador. On July 26, the British Government went still farther. They no longer limited their invitation to co-operation in order to secure the safety of the Canal. Lord Granville informed the Italian Ambassador in London that "Her Majesty's Government would also welcome the co-operation of Italy in a movement in the interior, which they were of opinion could no longer be delayed, and for which they were making active preparations." Lord Dufferin was also instructed to state to the Conference that "while reserving to themselves the liberty of action which the pressure of events might render expedient and necessary, Her Majesty's Government would be glad to receive the co-operation of any Powers who were ready to afford it."

At this moment, the Sultan, after much vacillation, had signified his readiness to send Turkish troops to Egypt. On July 29, General Menabrea informed Lord Granville that "under these circumstances, the Italian Government would be open to a charge of contradiction if they were to negotiate with a view to the intervention of any other Power, and that it only remained for them, therefore, to express their thanks to the British Cabinet for having entertained the idea that the friendship of Italy for England might take the form of an active co-operation." Although, therefore, these negotiations produced no practical result, they had the effect of calming Italian irritation. Henceforward, Italian policy in Egypt was conducted on lines which were consistently friendly to England.

In view of the restless ambition displayed at times by the Italian Government and their desire, which has frequently been manifested, to extend their influence in the Mediterranean, the refusal of Italy to co-operate with the British Government in Egypt appears at first sight strange. It is not probable that M. Mancini, who was then in power, could have attached much importance to Turkish promises, or that he could have believed to any great extent in the efficacy of Turkish assistance.

The real reasons for Italian inaction must be sought elsewhere than in a desire to spare the susceptibilities of the Porte. Something may, without doubt, be attributed to a reluctance on the part of Italy to separate herself from the European concert. Something was also due to the fact that, from a naval and military point of view, the Italian Government was not ready to take prompt action. But the main reason was to be sought in the mistrust of France, which then existed in Italy, and in fear of ultimate collision with the French, which engendered a reluctance to co-operate with them. Whatever may have been the reasons, the decision of the Italian Government was unquestionably a wise one. It relieved Italy from a heavy responsibility. It removed the risk of complications whether with France or England. It left the care of Italian interests in Egypt in the hands of a Power traditionally and necessarily friendly to Italy, and it enabled the Italian Government to devote themselves to the study of internal questions.

Turning from Paris and Rome to Constantinople, it will not be wholly unprofitable to trace in some detail the tortuous windings of Turkish diplomacy.

Immediately after the bombardment of Alexandria, the Sultan again brought forward his favourite solution of the Egyptian question. Tewfik Pasha should be deposed, and Halim Pasha should be installed in his place. The latter would be "an excellent ruler." His nomination would "prevent the effusion of blood and satisfy everybody." This proposal was summarily rejected by the British Government, and the Sultan was told that "he was only wasting time by putting forward such suggestions."

Pressure was brought to bear on the Porte to join the Conference, with the result that on July 20, Said Pasha and Assim Pasha were named to be the Turkish representatives.

After much hesitation, the Sultan consented to send troops to Egypt under conditions which were generally of a nature to keep Turkish intervention under the control of the Powers of Europe. On July 26, Said Pasha informed the Conference that troops were on the point of starting. At the same time, he "expressed a hope that the military intervention of the foreign Powers in Egypt would no longer be necessary." In reply, Lord Granville stated that "Her Majesty's Government would accept the arrival and co-operation of Turkish forces in Egypt, provided the character in which they came was satisfactorily defined and cleared from all ambiguity by previous declarations of the Sultan."

It was evident that the conditions under which Turkish co-operation was promised were far from being free from ambiguity. Moreover, the Sultan would not issue any Proclamation against Arábi. The Grand Vizier told Lord Dufferin that he "did not think it would be advisable to issue a Proclamation until after the troops were landed." Lord Dufferin replied that "if the Sultan desired to co-operate with Her Majesty's Government it was necessary he should first clearly define the attitude he intended to assume towards Arábi and the rebellious faction."

Whilst the Sultan, acting apparently under the erroneous impression that his assistance was indispensable, was thus endeavouring to intervene without the restraints imposed upon him by the Powers, the reluctance to call in Turkish aid in any shape was increasing, notably in Egypt. On July 31, the Khedive told Sir Auckland Colvin that he "was very apprehensive of Turkish intrigue, and trusted that the Turks would be closely controlled."

Preparations were now made for the despatch of 5000 Turkish troops to Egypt, and on August 2, Said Pasha undertook to submit to the Conference a draft Proclamation, denouncing Arábi as a rebel. Besides the Proclamation, which was necessary as a guarantee of the Sultan's intentions, it was essential that, before Turkish troops landed in Egypt, a Military Convention should be framed indicating the manner in which they were to be employed. On August 5, therefore, Lord Dufferin informed Said and Assim Pashas, "that unless the Sultan would issue a Proclamation of a satisfactory character, and unless the Turkish Government would consent to enter into a Military Convention with Her Majesty's Government, the Ottoman troops would not be allowed to land." At the same time, the British Admiral was instructed, in the event of any vessel with Turkish troops appearing at an Egyptian port, to inform the officer in command, "with the utmost courtesy, that the despatch of Turkish troops must be premature and due to some misunderstanding, and that his orders were to request the officer commanding to proceed to Crete or elsewhere, and to apply to the Turkish Government for further instructions, as he was precluded from inviting them to land in Egypt." The Admiral was, at the same time, instructed "to prevent their landing if they declined to comply with his advice." The result of adopting this firm attitude was that, at a meeting of the Conference held on August 7, the Ottoman Delegates made the following declaration: "The Sublime Porte accepts the invitation for military intervention in Egypt made to it by the Identic Note of July 15, as well as the clauses and conditions contained therein." At the same time, a promise was made to Lord Dufferin that a Proclamation declaring Arábi to be a rebel should be at once drawn up and communicated to him. On August 9, the Proclamation was sent to Lord Dufferin. On the 10th, the text of the Proclamation was accepted by the British Government with some slight modifications.

In the never-ceasing jar of Palace intrigue, which always goes on at Constantinople, the party which was in favour of an understanding with England appeared for the moment to have got the upper hand. The question of the Proclamation having been apparently settled, negotiations were set on foot with a view to the arrangement of a Military Convention between England and Turkey. A draft Convention was communicated by Musurus Pasha to Lord Granville on August 10. It provided that the British troops should not pass beyond the zone which they then occupied in Alexandria and its neighbourhood, that they should not remain more than three months, that all persons arrested should be handed over to the Khedive's authorities, and that all further details should be settled between the Ottoman Commissioners and the British Commander-in-Chief on the spot. It was obvious that these terms were unacceptable. The Sultan now made an effort to get the Military Convention before the Conference, instead of treating separately with the British Government. This attempt, however, failed. It had, indeed, now become clear to everybody, except the Sultan, that it was useless to prolong the sittings of the Conference. At a meeting held on August 14 "the Representatives of the Powers unanimously expressed their opinion that the moment had come to suspend the labours of the Conference." The Sultan, however, who but a short time previously had resisted the meeting of the Conference, and who had only been persuaded with difficulty to allow an Ottoman representative to attend its meetings, now gave a further instance of the perversity which appears always to attend Turkish diplomacy. He was anxious that the Conference should continue to sit, thinking, without doubt, that there would be a greater chance of dissension amongst the Powers if the Conference were sitting, than would be the case if it suspended its labours. The Ottoman delegates were, therefore, instructed to say that "they did not share the opinions of the Representatives of the Powers." They reserved the right of fixing a date for the next meeting of the Conference. The date was, however, not fixed. The Conference was never formally closed. It died a natural death.

Foiled in his attempt to bring the Military Convention before the Conference, the Sultan fell back on negotiations with the British Government. On August 18, Lord Dufferin spent five hours in discussing the matter with Said and Assim Pashas, with the result that the Turkish delegates agreed to a Convention subject to the approval of the Sultan. On the following day, the Sultan rejected the draft Convention, and made counter proposals which Lord Dufferin declined to discuss. At the same time, the Ottoman Government refused permission for the embarkation at Smyrna of some mules purchased for the use of the British troops in Egypt. The action was characterised by Lord Granville as "most unfriendly." In view of all these circumstances, Lord Dufferin wrote to Said Pasha and begged him "to consider as void and *non avenues* whatever friendly assurances and expressions of confidence in relation to the Egyptian question he might have addressed to him outside the Conference."

After the lapse of a few days, the negotiations were renewed. Munir Bey, an officer of the Sultan's household, was sent to Lord Dufferin to assure him "that it was from no unfriendly feeling towards England that the prohibition against the export of mules had been insisted upon, and that, in order to show his friendly feelings, His Majesty had ordered it to be removed." Lord Dufferin "took the opportunity of again repeating to Munir Bey some very earnest words of warning as to the gravity of the situation."

On the same day (August 23), Lord Dufferin, at the request of Said Pasha, paid him a visit and discussed the question of the Convention again with him and Assim Pasha. The result of this discussion was that the Turkish delegates agreed to all the clauses of the Military Convention proposed by the British Government, except that the latter wished the Turkish troops to disembark at Aboukir, Rosetta, and Damietta, whilst the Sultan attached great importance to the disembarkation taking place at Alexandria. Lord Dufferin then alluded to the Proclamation against Arábi, which, although the text had been arranged between the two Governments, had not yet been issued. What followed had best be related in Lord Dufferin's words. "Said Pasha," Lord Dufferin telegraphed, "then began with much hesitation, and evidently against his will, to suggest to me, in a roundabout manner, that the Proclamation agreed upon should not be issued at all in the first instance, but that another Proclamation of a different character, containing a final appeal to Arábi's sense of loyalty, should precede it. This impudent repudiation of his former engagements made me so angry that I got up and left the room, simply saying that it was impossible to negotiate either a Convention or anything else under such circumstances. On this, the two Pashas followed me downstairs and into the street, accompanied by their secretaries and dependants, calling to me that they withdrew every word of what they had said, that I must consider it altogether as *non avenu*, and that they would never again allude to the proposal. On concluding our interview in a more amicable mood, I told them that I could not sign any Convention until the Proclamation had been officially communicated to me in French and Arabic, and that not a single Turkish soldier would be allowed to land until it had been proclaimed in Egypt. The two Pashas seemed heartily ashamed of themselves, and admitted that they had been compelled to make the proposal very much against their will." On this interview being reported to London, Lord Granville telegraphed to Lord Dufferin that "Her Majesty's Government were unable to make any further changes in the provisions of the proposed Military Convention." Lord Dufferin was, at the same time, instructed to intimate to the Porte that, "under the present pressure of circumstances, it would not be well for the dignity of either England or Turkey that the negotiations should be indefinitely prolonged."

On August 24, Said and Assim Pashas paid a further visit to Lord Dufferin, and endeavoured to obtain some modifications in the draft Convention. On the 25th, an incident occurred which showed how little in earnest the Sultan was in the friendly assurances given to the British Government. Lord Dufferin telegraphed to Lord Granville: "I regret to have to inform your Lordship that although the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister had actually written a letter ordering the release of the shepherds and muleteers engaged by the contractors to proceed to Egypt in charge of the live stock which had been shipped at Odessa and Smyrna for the use of our army, a subsequent order from the Palace annulled their decision. A further order from the Palace has threatened with imprisonment the artificers who have undertaken to supply the contractors with the six hundred pack-saddles we require."

The time during which Turkish co-operation would have been useful, was now rapidly passing away. On August 25, Sir Edward Malet telegraphed to Lord Granville: "The action of the Sultan has been such as to prevent the possibility of the rebels believing that the Sultan is really anxious to assist us; and thus the moral support, which an alliance with Turkey might have given us, cannot any longer be attained. Both Chérif Pasha and Riaz Pasha have expressed confidentially their extreme anxiety to obviate the difficulties which the arrival of Turkish troops would entail, and they are especially apprehensive of the complications which may ensue hereafter from their presence in the country."

On August 27, the Turkish delegates again waited on Lord Dufferin and informed him that they would unconditionally accept the Convention in the terms to which the British Government had agreed. Directly the Convention was signed, the Proclamation denouncing Arábi as a rebel would be published in Egypt and communicated officially to the British Ambassador. It was known that the Austrian Government was anxious that England and Turkey should come to terms. It was more in deference to the views of that Government than for any other reason, that, on August 28, Lord Granville telegraphed to Lord Dufferin authorising him to agree to the Convention on the following conditions: That the animals, supplies, and persons for the British expedition should be immediately released, and that a promise should be given by the Porte to assist in forwarding the same to Egypt; that an assurance should be given that no further impediments would be offered hereafter; that the Proclamation declaring Arábi a rebel should be issued immediately; and that British officers, who should be sent either to Crete (where the Turkish force was then collected) or to Constantinople, as the Porte might prefer, should concert with Turkish officers as to the military operations to be undertaken. The matter appeared now at last to be settled. On August 31, Lord Granville telegraphed to this effect to Sir Edward Malet.

On the same day, Said Pasha made an earnest appeal to Lord Dufferin that the British Government should "allow the disembarkation of Turkish troops to take place at Alexandria, on condition that the troops should merely file through the town, and march at once to Aboukir." The Sultan, Lord Dufferin said, was "on his knees." "I would venture," Lord Dufferin added, "most earnestly to urge Her Majesty's Government to acquiesce in His Majesty's prayers." In spite of the little faith Lord Dufferin had in Turkish sincerity, he thought that a real chance of establishing good relations with the Porte had now presented itself. "The Sultan promised to do everything Her Majesty's Government desired in regard to the Proclamation, and to ensure an altered tone in the press." On September 1, Lord Granville telegraphed to Lord Dufferin that his recent message "altered the situation," but that the British Government could not agree to disembarkation at Alexandria. They "would prefer that the landing should take place in the Suez Canal." On September 2, Lord Dufferin was able to telegraph the final text of the Convention to Lord Granville, and to state that it was ready for signature. On September 3, Lord Dufferin saw the Sultan. "His Majesty confirmed, in a perfectly explicit manner, all the propositions made by Said Pasha." The Proclamation, the Sultan said, was being translated into Arabic and would be communicated to Lord Dufferin immediately. On September 4, Lord Dufferin was authorised to sign the Military Convention as soon as the Proclamation against Arábi was published.

Strong representations were again made by the Khedive and Chérif Pasha against the landing of Turkish troops in Egypt. Nevertheless, Lord Granville decided to adhere to his arrangement with the Sultan. This was all the more loyal on the part of the British Government, inasmuch as evidence was forthcoming to show that even at this late hour the Sultan contemplated treating with Arábi behind the backs both of the British Government and the Khedive.

By September 6, the Proclamation was ready and was published in the newspapers before being communicated to Lord Dufferin. It was found that the text did not tally with the draft to which the British Government had agreed. Lord Dufferin thereupon telegraphed to Lord Granville: "I at once stated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that, in presence of such an inconceivable act of bad faith as the publication without warning of a different document from that which had been formally agreed upon between the two Governments, I must decline signing the Convention; that I should report what had happened to my Government; and that I should not be surprised if it declined to continue negotiations. Said Pasha fully admitted that he had been guilty of an act of what he called 'heedlessness,' but he said that the fault had been committed through an excess of zeal, as the denunciation of Arábi in the new Proclamation was still stronger than in the old. He undertook . . . that an official correction of what had been published in the *Vakit* should be inserted in that paper. He begged me to do my best to mitigate the indignation, which I led him to understand this intolerable mode of procedure would arouse in the mind of the British Government." On September 10, Lord Granville telegraphed to Lord Dufferin accepting some of the changes made in the Proclamation, but objecting to others. Sir Edward Malet was, at the same time, informed that, in consequence of the difficulties which had been raised about the Proclamation, the signature of the Military Convention had been deferred. On the same day (September 10), the Turkish Plenipotentiaries met Lord Dufferin, bringing with them copies of a draft Convention and of a new Proclamation. Even at this late hour, however, further difficulties were raised. Said Pasha explained to Lord Dufferin "with much earnestness" that it was most desirable that the words "se rendront à Port Said," which had been struck out of the Convention, should be maintained. After much discussion, it was settled that the words should only be interpreted in the following sense, viz. that the Turkish ships should "direct their course to Port Said, in order to enter the Canal." Lord Granville was asked by telegraph to agree to this modification.

At the moment when the Porte was pressing for the signature of the Convention, another act was committed which showed how little confidence could be placed in the assurances of the Sultan. A number of porters, who had been engaged at Lord Wolseley's request for service with the army in Egypt, were imprisoned by order of the Porte. They were only released after Lord Dufferin had made a strong representation on the subject. Indeed, Lord Dufferin was at one time authorised to break off all diplomatic relations with the Porte.

On the afternoon of September 13, Lord Granville telegraphed to Lord Dufferin that he might sign the proposed Military Convention. On the morning of the same day, however, the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought. The French Government, who had always looked upon the presence of the Turks in Egypt with great disfavour, were the first to suggest that a Military Convention with the Porte was now no longer necessary. The Khedive also told Sir Edward Malet that "if anything could enhance the value of the victory, it was that it removed all pretext for the signature of a Convention with Turkey. He said that he looked back with dismay at the danger which Egypt would have incurred, if the Sultan, through the presence of his troops, had obtained a footing in the country." Under these circumstances, Lord Granville telegraphed to Lord Dufferin that he "presumed that the emergency having passed, His Majesty the Sultan would not now consider it necessary to send troops to Egypt."

Before this message could arrive, the Sultan sent for Lord Dufferin and kept him eleven hours at the Palace discussing a variety of further changes, which he wished to have made both in the Convention and the Proclamation. Finally, matters were brought to a close on September 18 by the despatch of the following telegram from Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin: "Her Majesty's Government greatly appreciate the fact that a substantial accord exists between the Government of the Sultan and that of Her Majesty on the Egyptian Question, and especially as to the rebellion of Arábi Pasha and the position of His Highness the Khedive. The occasion of the proposed Military Convention between this country and Turkey having now passed away, Her Majesty's Government rejoice that it is no longer necessary to discuss the difficulties which have been raised by His Majesty. Your Excellency is, therefore, authorised to convey to the Sultan, in the most courteous terms, the permission given you to drop the negotiations on this question."

In summing up the history of these events, Lord Dufferin said: "I can only reiterate that, from first to last, I have used every means at my disposal to induce the Turkish Government to move quickly, and to settle the matter out of hand. . . . Their conduct was so obviously contrary to their interests, that Europe had begun to misjudge the situation. While ruining my reputation as an honest man, they were enhancing it as a diplomatist, for it had begun to be believed that the delay in signing the Convention could not possibly result from their own incomprehensible shortsightedness, but must have been artificially created by the Machiavellian astuteness of the English Ambassador."

Lord Granville also summed up the Egyptian negotiations in a despatch to Lord Dufferin, dated October 5, 1882, which concluded with the following words: "This summary of events will show that the isolated action which has been forced upon Her Majesty's Government was not of their seeking. From the first moment when it became apparent that order could not be re-established in Egypt without the exercise of external force, they maintained that that force should be supplied by the Sultan as Sovereign of Egypt. They proposed this solution to the Conference, and Your Excellency lost no opportunity of urging it upon His Majesty and his advisers. Our efforts to induce them to intervene in Egypt, under conditions which would satisfy Europe, proved unavailing, and when it became necessary to make immediate provision for the safety of the Suez Canal, we prepared to undertake this duty jointly with France, with the co-operation of any other Powers who might be prepared to join us. We addressed a special invitation to Italy to take part in the arrangements. The progress of the rebellion having destroyed the authority of the Khedive, and reduced Egypt to a state of anarchy, we invited France and Italy to act with us in suppressing it; and when those Powers declined to do so, we still urged the Porte to send troops, insisting only on such conditions as were indispensable to secure unity of action. But, before the Turkish Government carried out its agreement to sign the Military Convention, the success of our arms had put an end to the insurrection."

The details of these negotiations have been stated at some length because they afford an admirable instance of the diplomatic procedure ordinarily adopted by the Ottoman Government. The Turks, as a nation, possess many fine, though perhaps somewhat barbaric qualities. But a species of paralysis appears to affect most Turks in high positions. The duplicity and shortsightedness of the Ottoman Government come out strongly in every incident of these negotiations.

It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of the military operations by which the insurrection in Egypt was crushed. They have been described in a book published by the British War Office, and in other works. It will be sufficient to say that Lord Wolseley arrived at Alexandria on

August 13. Previous to this, some desultory operations had taken place in the neighbourhood of Alexandria. Lord Wolseley decided to move on Cairo by way of Ismailia.[1] The Canal was seized in spite of the querulous cries of M. de Lesseps. On September 13, the Egyptian army was totally routed at Tel-el-Kebir.[2] A small force of cavalry was at once pushed on to Cairo, which was captured without a blow being struck. Kinglake's prophecy had been fulfilled. "The Englishman"—in the person of Major Watson, R.E., with two squadrons of the 4th Dragoon Guards and a detachment of Mounted Infantry, who occupied the Citadel on the evening of September 14—"planted a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sat in the seats of the faithful." Arábi and his associates, who throughout the whole affair do not appear to have displayed a single quality worthy of respect or admiration, surrendered.[3]

It is always a somewhat unprofitable proceeding to speculate on what might have been in politics, but I cannot close this portion of the narrative without hazarding a conjecture as to whether any foreign occupation of Egypt could have been avoided. Mistakes were, without doubt, committed. The true nature of the Arábi revolt was misunderstood.[1] It was more than a mere military mutiny. It partook in some degree of the nature of a *bona fide* national movement. It was not solely, or, indeed, mainly directed against Europeans and European interference in Egyptian affairs, although anti-European prejudice exercised a considerable influence on the minds of the leaders of the movement. It was, in a great degree, a movement of the Egyptians against Turkish rule. Although previous to the issue of the Joint Note some hope might have been entertained of guiding the movement, and although I am distinctly of opinion that an effort to guide it should have been made, it must be admitted that the chances of failure predominated over those of success. Leaving out of account questions of detail, and speaking with some knowledge of the various classes of Egyptian society, I ask myself, where were the elements for the formation of any stable government to have been found when, in pursuance of the policy of "Egypt for the Egyptians," there had been eliminated, as would probably have been the case, first, the Europeans, with all their intelligence, wealth, and governing power; secondly, the Khedive in whose place some illiterate Egyptian, of the type of Arábi or Mahmoud Sami, would have been appointed; thirdly, the Syrians and Armenians, with all their industry and capacity for sedentary employment; fourthly, the native aristocracy, largely composed of Turks, who were at that time the principal large landowners in the country, and amongst whom, in spite of many defects, the habits and traditions of a governing class still lingered; when, in fact, the nationalists and mutineers had got rid of all the classes, who then governed, and who for several centuries had governed the country? The residue would have consisted, first, of the mass of the fellaheen population, who were sunk in the deepest ignorance, who cared little by whom they were governed provided they were not overtaxed, and whose main idea throughout the Arábi movement was to tear up the bonds of the Greek or Syrian usurer; secondly, of a certain number of small proprietors, village Sheikhs, Omdehs, etc., who constituted the squirearchy of the country, and who, in point of knowledge and governing capacity, were but little removed from the fellaheen; thirdly, of the Copts, whose religion would certainly, sooner or later, have prevented them from acting in complete harmony with the Arábists, and who, even if tolerated by the Mohammedan population, could neither have obtained any influence over the Mohammedans, nor, even if that influence had been obtained, could have used it to the general advantage of the country; fourthly, of the hierarchy, consisting principally of the Ulema of the El-Azhar Mosque. The latter, though numerically the smallest, was by far the most important and influential of the four classes to which allusion is made above. The spirit which animated them would, in the first instance at all events, have been infused into the masses below. They would have been the Jacobins of the movement, which, whether nationalist or military, would certainly have been reactionary in so far as it would have tended to destroy whatever germs of civilisation had been implanted into Egypt. Like their prototypes in France, they would, had no strong hand intervened, have maintained their supremacy until, possibly after an acute and disastrous period of transition, their incapacity for government had been clearly demonstrated. The corruption, misgovernment, and oppression, which would have prevailed, if the influence of this class had become predominant, would probably have been greater than any to which Egypt had been exposed at previous periods. An attempt would have been made to regulate, not only the government, but also the social life of the country upon those principles of the Mohammedan faith which are most antiquated, obsolete, and opposed to the commonplace ideas of modern civilisation.

---

[1] Arábi was warned by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt that he would probably be attacked from the side of Ismailia. "I believe," Mr. Blunt writes (*Secret History*, p. 228), "that it was in consequence of this hint that the lines of Tel-el-Kebir were begun to be traced by Arábi."

[2] At this time, I was in India. On August 22, Lord Wolseley wrote to me from Ismailia: "I hope to hit Arábi very hard about the 10th or 12th of September at latest." Lord Wolseley was only twenty-four hours out in his prediction.

[3] Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, in spite of his sympathy with Arábi, says, in speaking of the fact that he did not attempt to handle the Egyptian troops in the field: "His abstention on this head has been attributed by his detractors to physical cowardice, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there was some truth in this."—*Secret History, etc.*, p. 385.

---

[1] Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who accompanied Lord Dufferin to Egypt and who had exceptionally good opportunities for forming an opinion on this subject, says: "There can be no longer any reasonable doubt that the English Government totally misconceived the real nature of the Egyptian revolutionary movement."—*Egypt and the Egyptian Question*, p. 365.

Egypt may now almost be said to form part of Europe. It is on the high road to the far East. It can never cease to be an object of interest to all the Powers of Europe, and especially to England. A numerous and intelligent body of Europeans and of non-Egyptian Orientals have made Egypt their home. European capital to a large extent has been sunk in the country. The rights and privileges of Europeans are jealously guarded, and, moreover, give rise to complicated questions, which it requires no small amount of ingenuity and technical knowledge to solve. Exotic institutions have sprung up and have taken root in the country. The Capitulations impair those rights of internal sovereignty which are enjoyed by the rulers or legislatures of most States. The population is heterogeneous and cosmopolitan to a degree almost unknown elsewhere. Although the prevailing faith is that of Islam, in no country in the world is a greater variety of religious creeds to be found amongst important sections of the community.

In addition to these peculiarities, which are of a normal character, it has to be borne in mind that in 1882 the army was in a state of mutiny; the Treasury was bankrupt; every branch of the administration had been dislocated; the ancient and arbitrary method, under which the country had for centuries been governed, had received a severe blow, whilst, at the same time, no more orderly and law-abiding form of government had been inaugurated to take its place.

Is it probable that a Government composed of the rude elements described above, and led by men of such poor ability as Arábi and his coadjutors, would have been able to control a complicated machine of this nature? Were the Sheikhs of the El-Azhar Mosque likely to succeed where Tewfik Pasha and his Ministers, who were men of comparative education and enlightenment, acting under the guidance and inspiration of a first-class European Power, only met with a modified success after years of patient labour? There can be but one answer to these questions. Sentimental politicians may consider that the quasi-national character of Arábi's movement gives it a claim to their sympathies, but others who are not carried away by sentiment may reasonably maintain that the fact of its having been a quasi-national movement was one of the reasons which foredoomed it to failure; for, in order to justify its national character, it had to run counter, not only to the European, but also to the foreign Eastern elements of Egyptian government and society. Neither is it in the nature of things that any similar movement should, under the present conditions of Egyptian society, meet with any better success. The full and immediate execution of a policy of "Egypt for the Egyptians," as it was conceived by the Arábists in 1882, was, and still is impossible.

History, indeed, records some very radical changes in the forms of government to which a State has been subjected without its interests being absolutely and permanently shipwrecked. But it may be doubted whether any instance can be quoted of a sudden transfer of power in any civilised or semi-civilised community to a class so ignorant as the pure Egyptians, such as they were in the year 1882. These latter have, for centuries past, been a subject race. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs from Arabia and Baghdad, Circassians, and finally, Ottoman Turks, have successively ruled over Egypt, but we have to go back to the doubtful and obscure precedents of Pharaonic times to find an epoch when, possibly, Egypt was ruled by Egyptians. Neither, for the present, do they appear to possess the qualities which would render it desirable, either in their own interests, or in those of the civilised world in general, to raise them at a bound to the category of autonomous rulers with full rights of internal sovereignty.

If, however, a foreign occupation was inevitable, or nearly inevitable, it remains to be considered whether a British occupation was preferable to any other. From the purely Egyptian point of view, the answer to this question cannot be doubtful. The intervention of any European Power was preferable to that of Turkey. The intervention of one European Power was preferable to international intervention. The special aptitude shown by Englishmen in the government of Oriental races pointed to England as the most effective and beneficent instrument for the gradual introduction of European civilisation into Egypt. An Anglo-French or an Anglo-Italian occupation, from both of which we narrowly and also accidentally escaped, would have been detrimental to Egyptian interests and would ultimately have caused friction, if not serious dissension, between England on the one side and France or Italy on the other.

The only thing to be said in favour of Turkish intervention is that it would have relieved England from the responsibility of intervening. It has been shown in the course of this narrative that, in the early stages of the proceedings, the policy of the two Western Powers, which was guided by the anti-Turkish sentiments prevalent in France, was not of a nature to invite or encourage Turkish co-operation. At a later period, the shortsightedness of the Sultan was such as to cause the Porte to commit political suicide in so far as decisive Turkish action was concerned. Perhaps it was well that it did so, for it is highly probable that armed Turkish intervention in Egypt, accompanied, as it might well have been, by misgovernment, paltry intrigue, corruption, and administrative and financial confusion, would only have been the prelude to further, and possibly more serious international complications.

By a process of exhausting all other expedients, we arrive at the conclusion that armed British intervention was, under the special circumstances of the case, the only possible solution of the difficulties which existed in 1882. Probably also it was the best solution. The arguments against British intervention, indeed, were sufficiently obvious. It was easy to foresee that, with a British garrison in Egypt, it would be difficult that the relations of England either with France or Turkey should be cordial. With France especially, there would be a danger that our relations might become seriously strained. Moreover, we lost the advantages of our insular position. The occupation of Egypt necessarily dragged England to a certain extent within the arena of Continental politics. In the event of war, the presence of a British garrison in Egypt would possibly be a source of weakness rather than of strength. Our position in Egypt placed us in a disadvantageous diplomatic position, for any Power, with whom we had a difference of opinion about some non-Egyptian question, was at one time able to retaliate by opposing our Egyptian policy. The complicated rights and privileges possessed by the various Powers of Europe in Egypt facilitated action of this nature.

There can be no doubt of the force of these arguments. The answer to them is that it was impossible for Great Britain to allow the troops of any other European Power to occupy Egypt. When it became apparent that some foreign occupation was necessary, that the Sultan would not act save under conditions which were impossible of acceptance, and that neither French nor Italian co-operation could be secured, the British Government acted with promptitude and vigour. A great nation cannot throw off the responsibilities which its past history and its position in the world have imposed upon it. English history affords other examples of the Government and people of England drifting by accident into doing what was not only right but was also most in accordance with British interests. *Δεῖ δὲ σκοπεῖν μὲν καὶ πράττειν ἀεὶ τὰ δίκαια, συμπαρατηρεῖν δ' ὅπως ἅμα καὶ συμφέροντα ἔσται ταῦτα.*[1] Such was the advice Demosthenes gave to his fellow-countrymen. In spite of some mistakes of detail, it was on this sound principle that, broadly speaking, the British Government acted in dealing with Egyptian affairs in 1882.

---

[1] Oration *For the Megalopolitans.*

# CHAPTER XVIII

## THE DUFFERIN MISSION

SEPTEMBER 1882–AUGUST 1883

British policy—Trial of Arábi—Resignation of Riaz Pasha—Exile of political prisoners—Courts-martial—The Alexandria Indemnities—The abolition of the Dual Control—Rupture of the Anglo-French understanding—Lord Dufferin's Report—My arrival in Egypt.

KINGLAKE's prophecy was that the Englishman would plant his foot firmly in the valley of the Nile. It had so far been fulfilled that the Englishman had planted his foot, but he had not planted it firmly. Hardly, indeed, had his foot been planted when, fearful of what he had done, he struggled to withdraw it. A few hours after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir had been fought, Sir Edward Malet was instructed to send to London "as soon as possible, suggestions as to army, finance, and administration for the future." Lord Dufferin was, at the same time, informed that "Her Majesty's Government contemplated shortly commencing the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt."

The British Government were, at a subsequent period, blamed for not having at once proclaimed a Protectorate. A petition signed by 2600 Europeans residing at Alexandria was presented to Lord Dufferin in favour of a permanent British occupation of Egypt. The Egyptians generally also viewed British intervention with unmixed satisfaction.

It cannot be doubted that if the position of the British Government had been more strongly asserted directly after the occupation, many of the obstacles which have stood in the path of the reformer would have been swept away. On the other hand, the adoption of a policy of this sort would have constituted a breach of faith with Europe. It is extremely doubtful whether it would have met with adequate support in England. It may be said, therefore, that the execution of this policy was, for all practical purposes, both undesirable and impossible.

Moreover, it is to be observed that the mere proclamation of a Protectorate would not in any degree have impaired the rights and privileges of Europeans resident in Egypt,[1] and it was these which so much hampered the progress of reform in the early days of the occupation. In order to ensure this result, annexation, either permanent or temporary, would have been necessary.

At the same time, it must be admitted that the situation in Egypt was misunderstood both by the British Government and by British public opinion of the time. Moreover, party politics cast their baneful spell over the English proceedings, and obscured the real issues at stake. Two alternative policies were open to the British Government. These were, first, the policy of speedy evacuation; and, secondly, the policy of reform. It was not sufficiently understood that the adoption of one of these policies was wholly destructive of the other. The withdrawal of the British troops connoted severity in the treatment of the rebels, the establishment of some rough prætorian guard composed of foreigners, who would have quelled all disturbance with a high hand, the re-establishment of an arbitrary rule, and the abandonment of all attempts to introduce the various reforms which follow in the train of European civilisation. On the other hand, the adoption of a policy of reform connoted an indefinite prolongation of the British occupation, and an increase of European interference, without which no progress was possible.

---

[1] The French Government established a Protectorate over Tunis in 1884, but subsequent negotiations with the Powers were necessary before the régime of the Capitulations could be modified. The difficulties which the existence of the Capitulations threw in the way of the French administration of Tunis have been described by a very competent authority, who wrote under the pseudonym of P.H.X., in the following terms:—"Les difficultés que devait faire cesser l'organisation de la réforme financière et de notre contrôle sont relativement peu de chose auprès des complications inextricables et des abus que la multiplicité comme la toute-puissance des juridictions Européennes en Tunisie avaient fait naître. Sous prétexte de protéger les Européens contre l'arbitraire et le désordre du Gouvernement Beylical, les Capitulations leur assuraient des privilèges qui s'étaient étendus démesurément à mesure que l'autorité locale s'affaiblissait ; ce qui n'était à l'origine qu'une exception était devenue plus fort que la règle, en sorte que l'administration indigène, eût-elle été animée des meilleures intentions du monde, s'était trouvée peu à peu complètement paralysée" (*La Politique Française en Tunisie*, p. 360).

It was natural and praiseworthy that public opinion in England should have been opposed to handing the Egyptians over to the uncontrolled rule of the Turkish Pashas, but it was characteristic of the want of consistency, which so often distinguishes English politics, that the same people who cried out most loudly for control over the Pashas, were also those who most strenuously opposed the adoption of the only method by which Pashas could be effectively controlled. They wished to withdraw the British troops, and, at the same time, to secure all those advantages which could only be obtained by their continued presence in the country. Party politicians had not failed to dwell constantly and in condemnatory terms on the number of Europeans employed in Egypt. It was a good *ad captandum* cry, for at the time the British public did not appreciate the extent to which European agency was necessary if a policy of reform was to be adopted. The attempt to attain two objects, which were irreconcilable one with the other, naturally rendered the policy of the British Government vacillating and uncertain.

This vacillation showed itself immediately after the occupation in the treatment accorded to Arábi and the other leaders of the rebellion. There could be no doubt that, as a subject of the Khedive, Arábi had been guilty of treason and rebellion, and that, as an officer of the army, he had been guilty of mutiny. Had he been tried by Court-martial and shot directly after he was taken prisoner, no injustice would have been done. On the other hand, he was regarded by some few Englishmen as a hero, and, from a purely political point of view, it was more than questionable whether it was wise to elevate him to the rank of a martyr. Moreover, it is not easy, as a matter of public morality, to state precisely at what point the sacred right of revolution begins or ends, or to say at what stage a disturber of the peace passes from a common rioter, who is an enemy to society, to the rank of a leader in a political movement set on foot for the attainment of ends which command at least a certain degree of sympathy. The commonplace standard of success is not a bad test by which to decide this question. It is difficult to justify unsuccessful rebellion, or to maintain that those who have been instrumental in bringing it about should not suffer the extreme consequences of their own conduct. Even from this point of view, however, it was not easy to decide on Arábi's fate. Had he been left alone, there cannot be a doubt that he would have been successful. His want of success was due to British interference. The British Government had, therefore, a perfect right to decide on his fate. Their decision could not be doubtful. British public opinion condemned the execution of prisoners for political offences, and the British Government would naturally follow public opinion on a point of this sort. "Her Majesty's Government," Lord Granville wrote, "were disposed to recommend to the Khedive to adopt the more humane practice of modern times, and to exercise his prerogative of mercy," if it were found that Arábi could not be charged with any other crimes than those of treason and rebellion.[1] It was, from the first, doubtful whether any "crime which, according to the practice of civilised nations, called for the extreme penalty of the law" could be brought home to Arábi, and it was certainly not worth while to prolong the proceedings, and thus keep the country in a ferment, whilst a lengthy inquiry into this point was going on. The best plan would have been for the British Government to have decided at once that Arábi and his principal associates should be exiled.

Unfortunately, this was not done. The fiction was maintained that the fate of the prisoners depended, not on the strong Government which had suppressed the revolt, but on the weak Government which had proved itself powerless to suppress it. Arábi and his fellow-prisoners were made over to the Khedive. There might have been some slight justification for the adoption of this course if the cession had been real, and if, in view of the early withdrawal of the British troops which was then contemplated, the British

---

[1] The following statement, for which, of course, there is not the smallest foundation, is one amongst very numerous illustrations which might be given of the little value to be attached to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's testimony on Egyptian affairs. He writes (*Secret History*, p. 443) that "Gladstone had made up his mind that Arábi should be executed no less than had the Foreign Office."

Government had stood aside whilst, under the protection of British bayonets, the Turkish party wreaked its vengeance on the Arábists, and struck terror into the hearts of future revolutionists. But this was obviously both undesirable and impossible. The cession was, therefore, made unreal. The Khedive was to have the appearance of dealing with Arábi, but he was not to move a step without the consent of the British Government. More than this, when the Egyptian Government established a court to try Arábi, it was thought, and, without doubt, rightly thought, that the trial would be a mockery. Hence arose an unseemly wrangle, in which the Egyptian Government endeavoured to create a condition of things which would increase the chances of Arábi being condemned to death, whilst the British Government insisted on a fair trial conducted in public, and with European counsel to defend the prisoners. The Egyptian Government were, of course, obliged to yield. After long discussions, the conditions under which the trial was to be conducted were settled. On November 7, Lord Dufferin, who had been deputed on a special mission to Egypt, arrived in Cairo. He saw at a glance that it was essential to bring the Arábi proceedings to a close. A preliminary inquiry had rendered it clear that no charge, except that of rebellion, could be established against Arábi. Lord Dufferin, therefore, arranged that Arábi should plead guilty to the charge of rebellion, that he should be sentenced to death, and that, immediately after the sentence was pronounced, it should be commuted into perpetual exile. This arrangement was carried out. Several places were suggested to which Arábi might be sent. It was finally settled that he should go to Ceylon. A special ship was chartered, and he and his six principal associates left Suez on December 26.[1]

In the meanwhile, Riaz Pasha resigned his position in the Ministry, ostensibly on the ground of ill-health. It was, however, well known that the real reason for his resignation was that he could not reconcile himself to the idea of Arábi having escaped capital punishment. Neither would it be fair to ascribe this attitude to vindictive feelings. Without doubt, Riaz Pasha thought that the execution of Arábi was not merely an act of justice but a State necessity.

In a report addressed to Lord Granville on December 12, Lord Dufferin described the effect produced in Egypt by the commutation of the capital sentence on Arábi and his principal followers. The Europeans and the Pashas condemned the leniency with which they had been treated. On the other hand, the mass of the people approved of the commutation of the sentences.

In addition to the leaders of the rebellion, about 150 persons were condemned, some to exile from Egypt, and some to residence in the provinces under police supervision for various terms. On January 1, 1883, a Decree was issued granting an amnesty to all other prisoners charged with political offences.

"The *débris* of the late rebellion having thus been cleared away," Lord Dufferin expressed a hope that "the stage was cleared for reconstruction." Unfortunately, however, some months were yet to elapse before the whole of these *débris* were fully cleared away. The prisons were crowded with persons who were charged with murder, pillage, and arson. At Tanta, from seventy to eighty Christians, mostly Greeks and Syrians, had been massacred, on July 13, by a mob of Moslem fanatics under circumstances of great brutality. On the same day, eight Italians had been killed at Mehallet-Kebir, and, on July 14, fourteen Christians and one Jew had been killed at Damanhour and its neighbourhood. In all these places, the houses and shops of the Christians had been pillaged. It was impossible to allow crimes of this nature to remain unpunished. Commissions were, therefore, appointed to make preliminary inquiries and to send accused persons, against whom a *prima facie* case had been established, for trial before a Court-martial. There was little risk of injustice being committed. "The persons dealt with by the Commissioners," Lord Dufferin pertinently remarked, "and by the Court-martial were Musulman Egyptians accused of murdering and pillaging Christians, principally European Christians. My experience of the East has long since convinced me that an Oriental court of justice may be safely trusted not to strain either law or evidence when the cause lies between a Musulman culprit and his Christian victim. During all the time I was in Egypt, Major MacDonald[1] was principally preoccupied in noting the tendency of the Court to unduly favour the prisoners; and Your Lordship may rest assured that whatever miscarriages of justice may have occurred have been occasioned by the escape of the guilty, and not by the condemnation of any innocent persons." These were wise words, but the advice of the impartial and experienced diplomatist was unheeded by party politicians in England, who saw in the Egyptian trials an opportunity for attacking the Government of the day. The fate of Suleiman Sami, a miscreant who was largely responsible for the burning of Alexandria and who was deservedly hanged, attracted a special degree of fictitious sympathy, and was characterised by Lord Randolph Churchill in the House of Commons as "the grossest and vilest judicial murder that has ever stained the annals of Oriental justice." Both the British Government and the authorities in Egypt, however, stood firm in the face of these attacks. In a few cases, capital punishment was inflicted. Others were condemned to various terms of penal servitude and imprisonment. A large number of accused persons were released after a preliminary inquiry. Eventually, on October 9, 1883, a Decree was issued abolishing the Special Commissions and the Court-martial.

---

[1] In 1901, Arábi was allowed to return to Egypt.

---

[1] Major (subsequently Sir Claude) MacDonald was Lord Dufferin's Military Attaché. He was charged with the duty of watching the proceedings of the Court-martial.

The punishment of the principal offenders was not the only burning question which the rebellion left in its wake. A large amount of valuable property had been destroyed at Alexandria. After some lengthy negotiations, a Decree appointing an International Commission to assess the claims was issued on January 13, 1883. The delay in the settlement of this question caused great irritation and discontent.

The final rupture of the Anglo-French *entente*, which followed immediately after the occupation, increased the difficulties of the situation. On September 20, M. Duclerc told the British Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, "that he thought it would be in the interest of England to give at an early date some notion of what her future intentions were with regard to Egypt." It was impossible at that moment to state, save in the most general terms, what were the intentions of England as regards Egypt, and it soon became apparent that the only point to which for the moment the French Government attached any real importance, was the continuance of the Anglo-French Control, as it existed previous to the occupation. The Egyptian Government, on the other hand, wished the institution to be abolished on the ground that its dual nature and semi-political character had caused great inconvenience. Public opinion in England pronounced strongly in favour of its abolition. In spite of considerable pressure exerted by France, the British Government wisely stood firm and declined to accede to the French wishes on this point. The presidency of the Commission of the Debt was offered to France, but was declined on the ground that it was not "consistent with the dignity of France to accept as an equivalent for the abolition of the Control, a position which was simply that of cashier." Eventually, after some sharp diplomatic skirmishing, the negotiations were dropped, and the French Government "resumed its liberty of action in Egypt." From that moment, until the signature of the Anglo-French Agreement in 1904, French action in Egypt was more or less persistently hostile to England.

On January 3, 1883, Lord Granville addressed a circular to the Powers in which he expressed himself in the following terms: "Although for the present a British force remains in Egypt for the preservation of public tranquillity, Her Majesty's Government are desirous of withdrawing it as soon as the state of the country and the organisation of proper means for the maintenance of the Khedive's authority will admit of it. In the meanwhile, the position in which Her Majesty's Government are placed towards His Highness imposes upon them the duty of giving advice with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character, and possess the elements of stability and progress." Lord Dufferin was sent to Egypt to report upon the measures which were necessary in order that "the administration of affairs should be reconstructed on a basis which would afford satisfactory guarantees for the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity in Egypt, for the stability of the Khedive's authority, for the judicious development of self-government, and for the fulfilment of obligations towards the Powers."

It is unnecessary to dwell on Lord Dufferin's detailed proposals. A few remarks on the main framework of his plan will suffice.

It was not the first time that an endeavour had been made on the banks of the Nile to make bricks without straw. The task, which Lord Dufferin was called upon to perform, was, in fact, impossible of execution. He was asked to devise a plan for the complete rehabilitation of the country, and, at the same time, one which would not be inconsistent with the policy of speedily withdrawing the British garrison. It can be no matter for surprise that, in spite of the qualities of statesmanship, political foresight, and literary skill, all of which Lord Dufferin possessed in an eminent degree, he should have failed to accomplish the impossible. It is, moreover, difficult to read Lord Dufferin's report without entertaining a suspicion that he was aware that the policy of the British Government was incapable of execution. There was only one practicable method by which the Egyptian administration could be reformed. That was to place the government more or less under British guidance. Lord Dufferin's statesmanlike eye saw this clearly enough. His remarks on this point form, indeed, the most valuable portion of his report. "I cannot," he said, "conceive anything which would be more fatal to the prosperity and good administration of the country than the hasty and inconsiderate extrusion of any large proportion of the Europeans in the service of the

Government, in deference to the somewhat unreasonable clamour which has been raised against them. For some time to come, European assistance in the various Departments of Egyptian administration will be absolutely necessary. . . . It is frightful to contemplate the misery and misfortune which would be entailed on the population, were the Financial, the Public Works, and analogous Departments to be left unorganised by a few high-minded European officials. The Egyptian Government would quickly become a prey to dishonest speculators, ruinous contracts, and delusive engineering operations, from which they are now protected by the intelligent and capable men who are at hand to advise them in reference to these subjects. This is especially true in regard to financial matters. The maintenance of Egypt's financial equilibrium is the guarantee of her independence."

Without doubt, Lord Dufferin was right. But in what manner was the ascendency of European influence to be secured? It could only be secured by the prolongation of the British occupation. Lord Dufferin's instructions, however, forbade him to state in clear and positive terms the inevitable inference to be drawn from his own proposals.

In the meanwhile, in deference, to a great extent, to British public opinion, a certain development of free institutions was proposed. But Lord Dufferin appears to have had little confidence that he would succeed in "creating a vitalised and self-existent organism, instinct with evolutionary force." "A paper constitution," he said, "is proverbially an unsatisfactory device. Few institutions have succeeded that have not been the outcome of slow growth, and gradual development; but in the East, even the germs of constitutional freedom are non-existent. Despotism not only destroys the seeds of liberty, but renders the soil, on which it has trampled, incapable of growing the plant. A long-enslaved nation instinctively craves for the strong hand of a master, rather than for a lax constitutional régime. A mild ruler is more likely to provoke contempt and insubordination than to inspire gratitude."

It was, without doubt, desirable to make some beginning in the way of founding liberal institutions, but no one with any knowledge of the East could for one moment suppose that the Legislative Council and Assembly, founded under Lord Dufferin's auspices, could at once become either important factors in the government of the country, or efficient instruments to help in administrative and fiscal reform.

Where Order deigns to come,
Her sister, Liberty, cannot be far.[1]

What Egypt most of all required was order and good government. Perhaps, *longo intervallo*, liberty would follow afterwards. No one but a dreamy theorist could imagine that the natural order of things could be reversed, and that liberty could first be accorded to the poor ignorant representatives of the Egyptian people, and that the latter would then be able to evolve order out of chaos. In the early days of the struggles which eventually led to Italian unity, Manzoni said that "his country must be morally healed before she could be politically regenerated."[2] The remark applied in a far greater degree to Egypt in 1882 than it did to Italy in 1827. Lord Dufferin was certainly under no delusion as to the realities of the situation. In the concluding portion of his report, he said that one of the main points to consider was "how far we can depend upon the continued, steady, and frictionless operation of the machinery we shall have set up. A great part of what we are about to inaugurate will be of necessity tentative and experimental. . . . Before a guarantee of Egypt's independence can be said to exist, the administrative system of which it is the leading characteristic must have time to consolidate, in order to resist disintegrating influences from within and without, and to acquire the use and knowledge of its own capacities. . . . With such an accumulation of difficulties, native statesmanship, even though supplemented by the new-born institutions, will hardly be able to cope, unless assisted for a time by our sympathy and guidance. Under these circumstances, I would venture to submit that we can hardly consider the work of reorganisation complete, or the responsibilities imposed upon us by circumstances adequately discharged, until we have seen Egypt shake herself free from the initial embarrassments which I have enumerated above." In other words, Lord Dufferin, without absolutely stating that the British occupation must be indefinitely prolonged, clearly indicated the maintenance of the paramount influence of the British Government for an indefinite period as an essential condition to the execution of the policy of reform.

---

[1] Akenside, *Pleasures of the Imagination.*

[2] Bolton King, *History of Italian Unity*, vol. i. p. 112.

Lord Dufferin threw out another important hint. "If," he said, "I had been commissioned to place affairs in Egypt on the footing of an Indian subject State, the outlook would have been different. The masterful hand of a Resident would have quickly bent everything to his will." After detailing the advantages to be derived from this system of government, Lord Dufferin added: "The Egyptians would have justly considered these advantages as dearly purchased at the expense of their domestic independence. Moreover, Her Majesty's Government and the public opinion of England have pronounced against any such alternative." Public opinion in England, however, had not pronounced strongly against this alternative. On the contrary, many people were of opinion that the course indicated by Lord Dufferin was the best to adopt. It is, moreover, possible, in spite of the forced condemnation which he pronounced, that Lord Dufferin was of a somewhat similar opinion. It was, indeed, clear that for some long while to come, the representative of the British Government in Egypt would of necessity be more than an ordinary diplomatic agent. "The title-deeds of all political authority," it has been truly said, "are elastic."[1] Their elasticity was about to be put to the test in Egypt.

The question of who should be the man then arose. I was at that time in India. Sir Edward Malet was promoted to be Minister at Brussels. The British Government did me the honour of inviting me to become his successor. I accepted the invitation and arrived in Cairo on September 11, 1883.

---

[1] Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton*, p. 169.

# PART III

# THE SOUDAN

## 1882–1907

*The difficulties of the case have passed entirely beyond the limits of such political and military difficulties as I have known in the course of an experience of half a century.*

Mr. Gladstone, *Speech in the House of Commons on Soudan affairs, February* 23, 1885.

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE HICKS EXPEDITION

JANUARY–NOVEMBER 1883

Extent of Egyptian territory—Misgovernment in the Soudan—Slave-hunting — Said Pasha's views — Colonel Stewart's Report — The Mahdi—Military and financial situation—Interference from Cairo —Attitude of the British Government — Destruction of General Hicks's army.

THE affairs of the Soudan exercised a very important influence on the course of events in Egypt, more especially during the years which immediately followed the British occupation of the country. They will, therefore, be treated separately.

At the time when this narrative commences, the nominal authority of the Khedive extended over an area stretching from Wadi Halfa on the north to the Equator on the south, a distance of about 1300 miles, and from Massowah on the east to the western limit of the Darfour province on the west, a distance of about 1300 miles—that is to say, he ruled, or attempted to rule, over a territory twice as big as France and Germany together.

The worst forms of misgovernment existed over this vast tract of country. Sir Samuel Baker, on the occasion of his second visit to the Soudan in 1870, wrote: "I observed with dismay a frightful change in the features of the country between Berber and the capital since my former visit. The rich soil on the banks of the river, which had a few years since been highly cultivated, was abandoned.

. . . There was not a dog to howl for a lost master. Industry had vanished; oppression had driven the inhabitants from the soil."[1] The taxes, which were excessive in amount, were collected by Bashi-Bozouks. These agents were described by Colonel Stewart, who was sent to the Soudan in the winter of 1882-83 to report on the state of the country, as "swaggering bullies, robbing, plundering, and ill-treating the people with impunity." In addition, moreover, to the evils attendant on a thoroughly bad and oppressive system of government, the Soudan suffered from a scourge peculiar to itself. It was the happy hunting-ground of the Arab slave-dealer. "The entire country," Sir Samuel Baker wrote, "was leased out to piratical slave-hunters, under the name of traders, by the Khartoum Government."

Even assuming that Ismail Pasha was sincere in his desire to suppress slavery and to govern the Soudan well, nothing is more certain than that he was powerless to do so. *Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint.* In extending his dominions to the centre of Africa, the Khedive had undertaken a task which was far beyond the military and financial resources, as well as the administrative capacity of the Egyptian Government. His predecessor, Said Pasha, saw this, although during his time the area, over which the Khedive of Egypt was supposed to exercise authority, was far smaller than in 1883. In 1856, Said Pasha visited Khartoum. "After due consideration he had almost decided to abandon the country, and was only restrained from doing so by the Sheikhs and Notables pointing out the inevitable anarchy that would result from such a measure." Twenty-seven years later, Colonel Stewart saw that the only hope of improvement lay in abandoning some of the outlying provinces of the Soudan, and thus bringing the ambitious task, which the Egyptian Government had set itself to perform, within comparatively manageable limits. "It is generally acknowledged," he wrote, "that the Soudan is, and has for many years been, a source of loss to the Egyptian Government. . . . Putting, however, the financial view of the question aside, I am firmly convinced that the Egyptians are quite unfit in every way to undertake such a trust as the government of so vast a country with a view to its welfare, and that both for their own sake and that of the people they try to rule, it would be advisable to abandon large portions of it. The fact of their incompetence to rule is so generally acknowledged that it is unnecessary to discuss the question."

---

[1] *Ismailia,* p. 11.

There is a tradition in the Mohammedan world that, at some future time, a Mahdi[1] will appear on earth, upon whose coming the world will be converted to the Mohammedan religion. A variety of unauthorised rumours are current amongst the lower orders of Mohammedans as to the appearance and qualities of the true Mahdi, such as, for instance, that he will have very long hands; but these are discarded by the more learned classes. A work written at Mecca in 1883 by a Sherif of that place, and entitled *The Conquests of Islam*, contains what may be considered as an authorised version of the conditions which the true Mahdi must fulfil. "The greatest of the signs," it is said, "shall be that he shall be of the line of Fatma (*i.e.* a Sherif, or descendant of the Prophet); that he shall be proclaimed Mahdi against his will, not seeking such proclamation for himself, and not causing strife amongst the Faithful to obtain it, nor even yielding to it till threatened with death by them.

---

[1] The literal meaning of the word "Mahdi" is one who is "conducted in the right path."

He shall be proclaimed in the Mosque of Mecca, not elsewhere; he shall not appear save when there is strife after the death of a Khalifa; he shall neither come nor be proclaimed until such time as there is no Khalifa over the Moslems. His advent shall coincide with that of Anti-Christ, after whom Jesus will descend and join himself to the Mahdi. These are the great signs of his coming. The others are imaginary or disputed, and whosoever shall, of his own will, declare himself to be Mahdi and try to assert himself by force, is a pretender, such as have already appeared many times."

In August 1881, a man named Mohammed Ahmed proclaimed himself to be the Mahdi in the Soudan.[1] He was born in 1843 in the province of Dongola. As a young man he was apprenticed to his uncle, a boatbuilder in Sennar, but the tendency which, from his earliest childhood, he had shown towards religious studies, led him to abandon trade, and to enter a religious school at Khartoum. His mission, as explained in his various Proclamations, was to gain over the Soudan to his cause, then to march on Egypt, overthrow the heretical Turks, and convert the whole world. All who opposed his mission were to be destroyed, whether Christians, Mohammedans, or Pagans.

Mohammed Ahmed was at once branded by

---

[1] Many persons had appeared in Egypt prior to 1881 claiming to be the Mahdi. See, for instance, Colonel Burgoyne's *History, etc., 1798 to 1801,* p. 13. In Ismail Pasha's time, a Mahdi appeared in Upper Egypt. He and his followers were put to death (see Lady Duff Gordon's *Letters from Egypt,* p. 342). In the Koran, no allusion is made to the coming of the Mahdi. The belief in a future Mahdi is based on a Hadith, that is to say, one of the traditionary sayings of the Prophet, which were recorded by Abu Bekr and others. It is confined to the Sunnis. According to the Shiahs, the Mahdi has already appeared in the person of Mohammed Abu el Kasim, the twelfth Imam, who is believed to be concealed in some secret place until the day of his manifestation before the end of the world.—Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam,* p. 305.

orthodox Mohammedans in Egypt and elsewhere as a False Mahdi (Mutemahdi). Neither, in spite of the credulity and ignorance of the population of the Soudan, is it probable that he would have met with any success even in that province, had not the prevailing discontent predisposed the inhabitants against the Egyptian Government. It was, however, Colonel Stewart wrote, "a melancholy fact that the Government was almost universally hated and abhorred." The people, therefore, flocked to the standard of the Mahdi, whose prestige was increased by some successes gained over the Egyptian troops in the early days of the insurrectionary movement. It soon became apparent that the Egyptian Government had to deal, not with any petty disturbance which must sooner or later succumb to superior force, but with a formidable rebellion, the suppression of which would tax to the utmost their military and financial resources. What, therefore, was the nature of those resources?

The army was in a deplorable condition. "The troops in garrison here (at Khartoum)," Colonel Stewart wrote on January 5, 1883, "are working at elementary drill and tactics, and are making some progress. It is, however, very uphill work; the officers are so ignorant and so incapable of grasping the meaning of the simplest movement. Quite one-third of the troops are also ignorant of the use of the rifle, and they would be more formidable as adversaries were they simply armed with sticks. Many have also superstitious ideas of the power of the Mahdi." A little later (February 27), Colonel Stewart wrote: "It is impossible for me to criticise too severely the conduct of the Egyptian troops, both officers and men, towards the natives. Their general conduct and overbearing manner is almost sufficient to cause a rebellion. When to this conduct cowardice is added, it is impossible for me to avoid expressing my contempt and disgust." Moreover, the soldiers were imbued with Arábist sympathies; their loyalty to the Khedive was doubtful. "The question," Colonel Stewart wrote on February 16, "is whether they will remain faithful, or whether their cowardice may not induce them to desert, knowing, as they will, that the Mahdi will not harm them. . . . At one or two of the late skirmishes, they were heard exclaiming, 'Oh, Effendina Arábi! If you only knew the position Tewfik has placed us in!'"

The financial position was as bad as the military. The Soudan revenue for 1882 was estimated at £E.507,000, and the expenditure at £E.610,000, thus leaving a deficit of £E.103,000. There is little use in endeavouring to ascertain what the real revenue of the Soudan was at this time. No trustworthy accounts were kept. It is certain, however, that it had for years been the practice to overestimate the revenue, and it was obvious in the then condition of affairs that little or no revenue of any kind was to be expected. "There can be no doubt," Colonel Stewart wrote, "that the deficits of many provinces are very far in excess of those stated. Probably, no revenue whatever has been collected in the province of Kordofan. Much the same can also be said of Dara and Fashoda. Sennar, with perhaps Darfour, must also be in pretty much the same plight."

Several British officers, chief amongst whom was General Hicks, were appointed to the staff of the Soudan army in the spring of 1883. Shortly after his arrival at Khartoum in March 1883, General Hicks made an appeal to Cairo for help.

Those who have followed the account which has already been given of the financial situation in Egypt at that time, will be able to judge of the degree of pecuniary assistance which it was possible for the exhausted Treasury at Cairo to afford to General Hicks. Nevertheless, an effort was made to provide funds for the Soudan. General Hicks was told that up to the end of the year 1883 the Egyptian Government would provide him with £E.147,000. The pecuniary aid thus afforded, though sufficient to cause embarrassment to the Egyptian Treasury, was wholly inadequate to meet General Hicks's wants. It only amounted to enough to provide for the pay of the men to the end of the current year. "The native Bashi-Bozouks," General Hicks pointed out, "are still months in arrears of pay. The men on the Blue Nile are in some cases two years in arrear."

The position, therefore, in the spring of 1883 was as follows:—The Treasury was exhausted; the army was unpaid, undisciplined, untrained, partially disloyal, and, therefore, worthless as a fighting machine.

Under such conditions, the Egyptian Government had to face a formidable rebellion, which drew its strength from two potent forces, namely: first, the religious fervour of a credulous, fanatical, but courageous population; secondly, the well-merited hatred engendered by a long course of misgovernment. The difficulty of the task was enhanced by the fact that the scene of the rebellion was remote from the headquarters of the Government, and that the physical difficulties of communication with the base of operations were very great. It was a task which would have taxed the resources of a civilised Government whose affairs were conducted by men of the utmost energy and intelligence. It was altogether beyond the strength of the inexperienced Cairene administrators, who had themselves only just emerged from an internal revolution which, but for foreign aid, would have been successful.

The Horatian maxim *Versate diu, quid ferre recusent, quid valeant humeri*, holds good of politics as well as of poetry. The first thing which the Egyptian Government ought to have done was to have considered whether their strength was proportionate to the task which they had undertaken. The main question to be decided was whether the Egyptian Government should, for the time being at all events, abandon the more remote parts of the Soudan and stand on the defensive at Khartoum, or whether an expedition should be sent into Kordofan, which had become the chief centre of rebellion, in the hope of dealing a crushing blow to the rising power of the Mahdi. The importance of the decision in this matter was realised by the British authorities on the spot, more especially by Colonel Stewart, who could speak with high authority on Soudan affairs. On December 27, 1882, that is to say, whilst El Obeid, the capital of the Kordofan province, was still besieged and Abdul-Kader Pasha, who was Governor-General of the Soudan, was preparing an expedition for its relief, Colonel Stewart wrote: "I would beg to point out how very important it is that the present expedition should prove a success. A failure would probably entail the total loss, if not of the Soudan, of at any rate many provinces. This truth can hardly be brought home with too much force to the Egyptian Government." At that time, Colonel Stewart thought that "Abdul-Kader had every right to expect a success." A little later (January 9), when Colonel Stewart had seen more of the Egyptian troops and had become strongly convinced of their inefficiency, he spoke less hopefully. Alluding to various small engagements in which the Egyptian troops had behaved badly, he wrote: "It is very evident that the matter will become exceedingly serious should the troops continue to exhibit such pusillanimity. It will be quite hopeless to expect to cope successfully with the rebellion, and it will only remain with the Egyptian Government to make the best terms they can with the Mahdi." On January 16, he recurred to the same subject. "This move of Abdul-Kader," he wrote to Sir Edward Malet, "is a critical one, for, should he meet with any reverse, it will probably be a decisive one, as far as Egyptian authority in this country is concerned."

On February 16, when the fall of El Obeid was imminent, Colonel Stewart wrote: "The question now arises, 'What should be done in this crisis?' I think the first thing the Government will have to decide on will be whether the Kordofan expedition should leave or not. My own opinion, from what I am told and know of the Egyptian soldiers, is that to send it would be to run a very great risk, and if the expedition were defeated, the probability is that the Soudan would be lost. Should it be decided to give up the expedition, I would then suggest that orders should be at once sent to Slatin Bey, the Governor of Darfour, to destroy all his stores and retreat as best he can on the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province. There is, of course, a chance that Khartoum may be beleaguered, but I can hardly fancy that even 10,000 Egyptian soldiers, if they remain faithful, and are commanded by some energetic officers, will allow themselves to be shut up." Two days later (February 18), the news of the fall of El Obeid reached Khartoum. On February 20, Colonel Stewart wrote: "I am strongly of opinion that to advance now on Kordofan would be exceedingly injudicious, and that the alternative policy of remaining on the defensive, vigorously putting down any attempted rising on this bank of the Nile, and waiting to see what will happen, is the true one. To advance now with our miserable troops against an enemy flushed with recent success, well supplied with arms, and worked up to a pitch of fanaticism, would be but to risk a disaster with no corresponding advantage now that Obeid has fallen. A serious disaster or, indeed, a check, would also very probably involve the loss of the whole of the Soudan." Speaking of the "utter worthlessness of the Egyptian infantry," Colonel Stewart added: "It is almost impossible for me to convey an idea of the contempt with which all classes of people here regard them. The negro troops will not associate with them, nor will, curiously enough, the Egyptian officers in command of those troops."[1]

It was unfortunate that Colonel Stewart's advice was not followed. Both Lord Dufferin and Sir Edward Malet shared his views. On April 2, 1883, Lord Dufferin had an interview with Ibrahim Bey, the head of the Soudan Department at Cairo, in which he said that "if the Egyptian Government were wise, it would confine its present efforts to the re-establishment of its authority in Sennar, and would not seek to extend its dominion beyond that province and the bordering river banks." In his general report on Egypt, Lord Dufferin, whilst deprecating the abandonment of the whole of the Soudan, no necessity having as yet arisen for so heroic a remedy, added: "I apprehend, however, that it would be wise on the part of Egypt to abandon Darfour and perhaps part of Kordofan, and to be content with maintaining her jurisdiction in the provinces of Khartoum and Sennar." On June 5, when General Hicks was urging the Egyptian Government, through Sir Edward Malet, to give him more men and more money, the latter telegraphed to Lord Granville: "Your Lordship is aware that it is already impossible for the Egyptian Government to supply the funds demanded for the Soudan, and the proposed operations will run a considerable risk of failure unless they are conducted on a large scale, and unless the army is well supplied in every respect. Under these circumstances, a question arises as to whether General Hicks should be instructed to confine himself to maintaining the present supremacy of the Khedive in the region between the Blue and White Niles." Sir Edward Malet added that he "had furnished Chérif Pasha with a copy of General Hicks's telegram, as requested, but without comment or expression of opinion upon its contents."

---

[1] In a letter dated September 1, 1883, Mr. Power, the British Consular Agent at Khartoum, wrote: "In three days, we march on a campaign that even the most sanguine look forward to with the greatest gloom. We have here 9000 infantry that fifty good men would rout in ten minutes, and 1000 cavalry (Bashi-Bozouks) that have never learnt even to ride, and these, with a few Nordenfelt guns, are to beat the 69,000 men whom the Mahdi has got together. . . . That Egyptian officers and men are not worth the ammunition they throw away, is well known."—Power's *Letters from Khartoum*, p. 20.

What, however, was the opinion of General Hicks, the officer who was to command the expedition about to be sent against the Mahdi? General Hicks's position was one of great difficulty. The Government at Cairo had not learnt the elementary lesson that, in dealing with a state of affairs such as that which then existed in the Soudan, the first essential and preliminary condition to success was to entrust the supreme command to one individual and to support him cordially. Ala-el-Din Pasha was sent to Khartoum to supersede Abdul-Kader Pasha, of whom Colonel Stewart thought highly; but when he arrived (February 1883) he did not, in the first instance, declare his mission. "Although," Colonel Stewart wrote, "nominally he has no official position, his presence is sufficient to neutralise the influence of Abdul-Kader, with the result that practically no one is in command." It is easy to believe that the position of the Governor-General at Khartoum was thus rendered extremely difficult. Suleiman Pasha Niazi, who is described by Colonel Stewart as "a miserable-looking old man of seventy-four or seventy-five," was sent up in nominal command of the troops, with the understanding "that he was to defer in all things to his subordinate (General Hicks), who was held responsible for the direction of all preparations and operations." In addition to the confusion caused by these arrangements, much harm resulted from the inveterate habit, which was at that time common to many high Egyptian authorities, of giving orders direct to subordinate officials over the heads of their superiors. After mentioning a flagrant instance of this sort, Colonel Stewart added (January 26): "I need hardly point out how deplorable is this independent action of the Khedive's. Should it continue, we shall not alone have all the authorities here quarrelling with each other, but it will be also quite impossible to carry out any concerted plan. The Khedive must entrust some one here with supreme authority (Dictator) and then leave him alone. To telegraph what he should do or not do, or to correspond with his subordinates over his head, is only to make his position quite untenable, and to insure a disastrous termination to the campaign." Colonel Stewart's letters written at this time, are full of complaints of the "backstairs influence" exerted at Cairo, and of the "unbusinesslike interference of the Cairo Government in Soudan affairs." "Until matters," he wrote on February 27, "are conducted in a businesslike, straightforward, and honest way, it is hopeless to expect any amelioration in the Soudan."

The difficulties of a British officer suddenly thrust into the middle of these paltry intrigues can easily be imagined. General Hicks soon found his position intolerable. Suleiman Pasha in no way considered his own office as a sinecure. On the contrary, he paid no attention to the opinions expressed by General Hicks. At last, after making a series of complaints to which little attention was paid, General Hicks telegraphed, on July 16, to Sir Edward Malet: "My orders and arrangements here are quite disregarded; promises are made that they shall be carried out, but nothing whatever is done. Suleiman Pasha disregards them altogether. It is useless to keep me here under these conditions, and it is a position which I cannot hold. I beg you will have me recalled." This telegram brought matters to a crisis. General Hicks was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Soudan with the rank of General of Division. Suleiman Pasha was recalled from Khartoum, but any good effect, which might otherwise have been produced by this measure, was marred owing to his being at once named Governor of the Eastern Soudan. His new appointment, General Hicks telegraphed, was "looked upon as promotion."

In view of the intrigues which surrounded General Hicks, of the wretched material of which his army was composed, and of the fact that the Egyptian Government could not comply with his requests for men and money, it is scarcely conceivable that he should have been confident of success. But he seems to have underrated the difficulties of the task which lay before him. He was perhaps unduly elated at some trifling successes gained during the early stages of the rebellion over the forces of the Mahdi. He thought (June 23) that as he advanced, the tribes, though "afraid of commencing hostilities against the Mahdi, would join him as camp-followers." It does not appear that at any time General Hicks was definitely asked by the Egyptian Government to state his views as to the wisdom of undertaking the expedition, though it might have been supposed that ordinary prudence would have dictated the necessity of obtaining, in official form, a very distinct expression of his opinion on this momentous question. But on June 18, that is to say about three months before he started into the Kordofan desert, he telegraphed to General Valentine Baker, who was at the time at the head of the Egyptian Police: "In my telegram of the 3rd of June to Malet, I pointed out what I thought was necessary to ensure success in Kordofan and guard against all possible eventualities.[1] At the same time I am prepared to undertake the campaign with the force available; the risks are, as I have said, in case of a mishap, but I think this is not at all probable. Khartoum ought to be safe from outside under any circumstances."

Looking to the terms of this telegram, it is not difficult to judge of General Hicks's frame of mind. In view of the fact that the expeditionary force, as it eventually started, was below the strength which he recommended, and that the material of which the army was composed was of the worst possible description, it can scarcely be conceived that he felt sanguine of success. It may be surmised that his qualified expression of willingness to undertake the campaign was inspired, not so much by any heartfelt confidence of success based on a full consideration of the whole of the facts, as by the reluctance naturally felt by a gallant soldier to appear to shrink from a dangerous undertaking.

---

[1] The telegram to which allusion is here made runs as follows: "The force we have is not nearly sufficient to undertake the Kordofan campaign. . . . It should be 10,000 men. What number of men will it be possible for the Government to send me in augmentation? When we consider that a defeat might mean not only the loss of Darfour and Kordofan, but also of Sennar, and possibly Khartoum, I think no risk should be run." It was this telegram which elicited the opinion expressed by Sir Edward Malet (*vide ante*, p. 359) that General Hicks should confine his operations to the country lying between the Blue and White Niles. But the telegram was sent on to Chérif Pasha "without comment or expression of opinion." The natural result ensued. General Hicks's weighty opinions were never properly considered.

The truth is that the decision in this matter should not have been left to General Hicks. It was from no fault of their own that the Government which then existed at Cairo were powerless to provide the resources, whether in men or money, which were necessary in order to suppress the rebellion. The helplessness of the Khedive's Government was the result of the misgovernment of the Khedive's predecessor. But it behoved the Egyptian Ministers to look the facts with which they had to deal fairly in the face, and to bring the objects, which they sought to attain, into harmony with the means which they possessed for attaining them. They did nothing of the sort. They drifted on, until at last they brought on their heads a catastrophe, which involved the collapse of Egyptian authority over the whole of the Soudan.

There was only one method by which the realities of the situation might have been brought home to the minds of the Khedive and his Ministers. The British Government should have insisted on the adoption of a rational and practicable policy. Unfortunately, they abstained from all interference. They appear, indeed, to have seen that the wisest plan for the Egyptian Government would have been to stand on the defensive at Khartoum. But they did nothing to enforce this view.

The British Government had, in fact, been led much against their will into the occupation of Egypt. They were now fearful that they might unconsciously drift into military intervention in the Soudan. Lord Granville was determined to guard against this danger. He refused to have anything to say to Soudan matters. The fact that General Hicks's telegrams were sent to the various Egyptian authorities through Sir Edward Malet roused him to a sense of danger. He thought that the British representative, by allowing himself to become the medium of communication between Cairo and Khartoum, might involve his Government in some degree of responsibility. On May 7, Lord Granville, therefore, telegraphed to Mr. Cartwright, who temporarily occupied Sir Edward Malet's place: "Her Majesty's Government are in no way responsible for the operations in the Soudan, which have been undertaken under the authority of the Egyptian Government, or for the appointment or actions of General Hicks." This disclaimer of responsibility was repeated in a letter addressed by Sir Edward Malet to Chérif Pasha on May 22, when forwarding another telegram addressed by General Hicks to Lord Dufferin. "In this particular instance," Sir Edward said, "I desire to guard against any supposition on the part of Your Excellency that my sending a copy of the telegram to Your Excellency indicates any expression of opinion with regard to the recommendations contained in it."

A little later, Lord Granville was again alarmed at the continuance of communication between Sir Edward Malet and General Hicks. On August 8, he wrote to Sir Edward Malet: "It appears that General Hicks continues to communicate with you respecting the financial difficulties which he meets with in the Soudan, under the impression that you will exert your influence with the Egyptian Government to induce them to give favourable consideration to his wishes. I need not remind you that Her Majesty's Government assume no responsibility whatever in regard to the conduct of affairs in the Soudan, and it is desirable that General Hicks should understand that, although they are glad to receive information as to the progress of the campaign, it is their policy to abstain as much as possible from interference with the action of the Egyptian Government in that quarter." Sir Edward Malet informed Lord Granville that his action had been in strict conformity with the instructions he had received on this subject. He took steps, also, to render the position clear to General Hicks. On August 18, he telegraphed to General Hicks: "I congratulate you on your appointment as Commander-in-Chief and General of Division. The act is spontaneous on the part of the Egyptian Government, for although I am ready to transmit to them telegrams that come from you, I am debarred by my instructions from giving advice with regard to action on them, the policy of Her Majesty's Government being to abstain as much as possible from interference with the action of the Egyptian Government in the Soudan."

The objections to British military intervention were obvious, neither was the danger against which Lord Granville sought to guard imaginary. It might well have happened that, almost before the Government were aware of it, they might have found themselves in a situation which would have obliged them to assert their authority by force of arms in the Soudan. The history of the rise of British power in the East served as a warning that one forward step in the direction of territorial extension often leads to another, until at last a goal is reached far more distant than any which was originally contemplated. Moreover, when once a question, such as the state of the Soudan, becomes a matter for public discussion in England, there are not wanting many who, partly from the love of adventure natural to most Englishmen, partly from a keen sense of the benefits which would be conferred locally by British interference, and partly from a great, perhaps an exaggerated idea of England's mission as a civilising agent in the world, are prone to push on the Government to action without sufficient consideration of the ultimate consequences of their proposals. Under these circumstances, it behoved a wise statesman to move cautiously. Nevertheless, looking back over the course of events as we now know them, it must be admitted that the line of action which Lord Granville adopted was very unfortunate. It is to be regretted that he did not by timely interference save the Egyptian Government from the consequences of their own want of foresight. Had he, acting on the views expressed by the various British authorities in Egypt, stepped in and forbidden the despatch of the Hicks expedition to Kordofan, not only would thousands of lives and the large sums of money, which were subsequently squandered, have been saved, but he would have deserved the gratitude of the Egyptian people, and would have saved his own country from that interference which he so much dreaded, and which was eventually precipitated by the negative policy adopted in the early stage of the proceedings. Lord Granville appears to have thought that he effectually threw off all responsibility by declaring that he was not responsible. There could not have been a greater error. The responsibility of the British Government for the general conduct of affairs in Egypt did not depend on a few phrases thrown into a despatch and subsequently published in a parliamentary paper. It was based on the facts that the British Government were in military occupation of the country, that the weakness and inefficiency of the native rulers were notorious, and that the civilised world fixed on England a responsibility which it was impossible to shake off so long as the occupation lasted. "Those," Lord Salisbury said in the House of Lords (February 12, 1884), "who have the absolute power of preventing lamentable events, and knowing what is taking place, refuse to exercise that power, are responsible for what happens." Lord Granville failed to see this. Instead of recognising the facts of the situation, he took shelter behind an illusory abnegation of responsibility, which was a mere phantasm of the diplomatic and parliamentary mind. The result was that the facts asserted themselves in defiance of diplomacy and parliamentary convenience.

It may, however, be urged in defence of the policy adopted by Lord Granville that he does not appear to have received sufficient warning of the possible, and, indeed, probable consequences of inaction. What was most of all required was that an alarm-bell should be rung to rouse the British Government from its lethargy, and show that the consequences of inaction might be more serious than those of action.[1] But no sufficient warning appears to have been given. The result was that the Egyptian Government blundered on headlong to their own destruction, and that the British Government, like the frail beauty of Byron's poem, whilst vowing that they would ne'er consent to a policy of intervention in the Soudan, consented but a short time afterwards to a degree of intervention far greater than would have been necessary had the true facts of the situation been in the first instance recognised.

---

[1] "I am not of the opinion of those gentlemen who are against disturbing the public repose; I like a clamour when there is an abuse. The fire-bell at midnight disturbs your sleep, but it keeps you from being burned in your bed. The hue-and-cry alarms the country, but it preserves all the property of the province."—Burke's *Speech on the Prosecution for Libels.*

On September 8, 1883, that is to say, three days before my arrival in Egypt, General Hicks started on the expedition, which was to terminate in so disastrous a manner. At Cairo, news from the Soudan was anxiously awaited, but no one contemplated the possibility of the disaster which shortly ensued. I remember speaking to Chérif Pasha as to the desirability of giving up the outlying provinces of the Soudan. He was not disinclined to give up Darfour; on the other hand, he held strongly to Kordofan. But, he added, with the light-heartedness characteristic of a Gallicised Egyptian, "Nous en causerons plus tard; d'abord nous allons donner une bonne raclée à ce monsieur" (*i.e.* the Mahdi).[1]

Chérif Pasha was soon undeceived. On November 22, news reached Cairo that on the 5th General Hicks's army had been totally destroyed. "Hardly anything was known of the country into which the army was venturing, beyond the fact that it was the driest in the Soudan." The last communication received from General Hicks spoke of the want of water and of the intense heat. The final catastrophe is described by Colonel Colville in the following words: "On advancing to Kasghil, the army was led astray by the guides, who were Mahdi's men, and who, when they were sure that it was thoroughly lost in the bush, deserted it. After wandering three days and nights without water, they came upon a force of the enemy near Kasghil. But many hundreds had already died from thirst, and the remainder were too feeble to offer any determined resistance, and were soon despatched by the enemy. A brilliant charge was made by Hicks Pasha and his staff, who all died fighting like men."[1]

---

[1] On January 4, 1884, Sir Charles W. Wilson wrote: "When Hicks Pasha left Cairo, it was not intended that he should do more than clear Sennar of rebel bands, a work he accomplished with ease, and protect Khartoum. It is useless to inquire what madness made the Egyptian Government order Hicks Pasha to attempt the reconquest of Kordofan; it was a hazardous operation, and with the troops employed, of whom Colonel Stewart has given a faithful picture, disaster was an almost foregone conclusion."

It was not until twenty-two years later that the site of the Hicks disaster was visited by any European. Sir Reginald Wingate went over the ground in the course of a tour through Kordofan during the winter of 1905-6. He recorded his impressions in the following words:—

> I visited the battlefield where the late General Hicks Pasha and his force were almost entirely annihilated by the Dervish hordes in 1883, despite the fact that within a mile of the spot where the thirst-stricken troops were overwhelmed was a large pool of water, of which they were apparently in complete ignorance. The locality is in the depths of a huge forest some thirty miles south of El Obeid, and I have no hesitation in hazarding the opinion that, had the efforts to relieve El Obeid been conducted by a far more numerous and efficient force, the result would have been the same. It is abundantly evident that the Government of that period neither realised the situation nor appreciated the enormous difficulties attendant on the movement of a large force through such country; the dispatch of the expedition, under the circumstances, can only be characterised as an act of extreme folly.

Thus, the whole edifice of territorial aggrandisement in Africa, which Ismail Pasha and his predecessors, in an evil moment for their country, had planned, toppled to the ground. It was built on no sure foundation. The power gained by semi-civilised skill over the wild tribes of the Soudan had been grossly misused. Slave-hunting Pashas, and corrupt and extortionate tax-collectors, had rendered the name of Egypt hateful to the people. A despotism, which is neither strong nor beneficent, must perforce fall directly it is exposed to serious attack. The bubble Government established by Ismail Pasha and his predecessors in the Soudan collapsed directly it was pricked by the religious impostor who was now to rule the country, neither amongst the population whose fate was at stake in the combat was a voice raised or a sword drawn to avert its downfall.

---

[1] *History of the Soudan Campaign*, p. 16.

# CHAPTER XX

## THE ABANDONMENT OF THE SOUDAN

November 1883–January 1884

My position—I press the British Government to depart from a passive attitude—Lord Granville's reply—The Egyptian Government decide to hold Khartoum—Colonel Coetlogon recommends a retreat on Berber—Opinions of the military authorities at Cairo—The Egyptian Government wish to invoke the aid of the Sultan—The British Government recommend withdrawal from the Soudan—The Egyptian Ministers resign—Nubar Pasha takes office—Observations on the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan.

I HAVE so far been dealing with a period of Egyptian history during which I either played a subordinate part, or was in no way connected with Egypt. I have occasionally criticised the acts of those who were responsible for the conduct of Egyptian affairs at this time. I now reach another period. It would be false modesty not to recognise that from this time forward I was myself one of the principal actors on the Egyptian stage, not, of course, to the extent of being responsible for the general policy of the British Government, but rather to the extent of being mainly responsible for the management of local affairs in Egypt. This latter responsibility I accept, only begging that it should be borne in mind that my action had of necessity to conform itself to the lines of general policy adopted in London.

During the period when I represented the

British Government in Egypt, Egyptian affairs frequently formed the subject of public discussion. My own conduct was at times sharply criticised. Any one engaged in English public life must expect at times to receive some hard knocks. I believe I know, perhaps better than any one else, the mistakes which I committed, and I shall use my best endeavours to deal with them at least as unsparingly as I have dealt with what appear to me to be the mistakes of others. *Se judice, nemo nocens absolvitur.*

The first step of any importance taken in connection with Soudan affairs after my arrival in Egypt was on November 19, 1883, on which day I sent the following telegram to Lord Granville: "The position of affairs in the Soudan is becoming very serious. . . . Nothing definite has been heard of Hicks since September 27. He only had provisions for two months. The Egyptian Government are very anxious, and evidently anticipate bad news. Giegler Pasha, who was with Gordon in the Soudan, and whom I saw to-day, says that if Hicks is beaten, Khartoum will probably fall. In fact, the Egyptian Government have no money, and excepting Wood's and Baker's forces,[1] they have sent almost their last available man to the Soudan. If Hicks's army is destroyed, I have little doubt that, unless they get assistance from outside, they will lose the whole of the Soudan. Neither, if once they begin to fall back, is it easy to say where along the valley of the Nile they could arrest the rebel movement. From some observations which Chérif Pasha let drop to me this morning, I think it not at all improbable that before long he will ask for the assistance of English or Indian troops. He said to me, 'I suppose Her Majesty's Government would not like to see Turks intervene in the Soudan?' Shall I be right in telling him, if the occasion arises, that under no circumstances must he look for the assistance of British or Indian troops in the Soudan? As regards Turkish assistance, I should be glad to receive instructions as to the attitude I am to adopt. It is a question which course the Egyptian Government would dislike most—to call in the Turks, or to abandon the Soudan. My own opinion is that, if Hicks be beaten, the wisest course for the Egyptian Government to adopt is to accept defeat and fall back on whatever point on the Nile they can hold with confidence, although the adoption of this course would certainly give a great impulse to the Slave Trade. But it will not be easy to persuade them of this. Turkish intervention would, I think, be most undesirable. . . . I may now, at any moment, be forced to discuss these Soudan affairs with Chérif Pasha, and it is, therefore, desirable that I should receive some indications of Your Lordship's views. It will be very difficult, under the circumstances, to maintain a purely passive attitude, and to give no advice whatsoever."

---

[1] Sir Evelyn Wood commanded the Egyptian army then in course of formation. General Valentine Baker commanded the Gendarmerie.

To this telegram Lord Granville replied, on November 20, in the following words: "We cannot lend English or Indian troops. . . . It would not be for the advantage of Egypt to invite Turkish troops into the Soudan. If consulted, recommend the abandonment of the Soudan within certain limits."

The principal object which I had in view in sending my telegram of November 19 was to draw the British Government out of the passive attitude which they had hitherto adopted. A short residence in the country had been sufficient to convince me that it was neither possible nor desirable to leave the Egyptian Government to manage Soudan affairs without any advice or assistance.[1] My object had been attained. It is true that I was instructed only to give advice "if consulted," but as I was sure to be consulted, the reserve placed on my action did not practically hamper me. I had obtained a definite expression of opinion as to the Soudan policy which commended itself to the British Government in the event of a disaster happening to General Hicks's army. They would not afford military aid to reconquer the Soudan; they were also averse to the employment of Turkish troops. Under these circumstances, the only possible course to pursue would be to abandon the Soudan within certain limits. This is the policy which, as has been already mentioned, commended itself to Lord Dufferin, Sir Edward Malet, and Colonel Stewart; but the telegram which I sent on November 19, was, so far as I am aware, the first occasion upon which the British Government were strongly pressed to express a decided opinion on the subject. I consider myself, therefore, largely responsible for initiating the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan. On Mr. Gladstone's Government rests the responsibility of approving that policy.

So early as November 18, a report reached Cairo that General Hicks's army was surrounded and in want of provisions. But it was not till the 22nd that intelligence was received of the destruction of the army.

---

[1] On November 22, I wrote privately to Lord Granville: "I fully understand the policy of the Government, which is not to be drawn into affairs in the Soudan. I see no reason why this policy should not be carried out. On the other hand, it is quite impossible to separate the Egyptian question from the Soudan question altogether." In another letter, dated December 23, I said: "The separation of the Soudan question from the question of Egypt proper was always well-nigh impossible on financial grounds. Now, it has become quite impossible. I think the policy of complete abandonment is, on the whole, the best of which the circumstances admit; but I am not sure if the extreme difficulty of carrying it out, or the consequences to which it must almost inevitably lead, are fully appreciated at home."

I did not at once press any advice on the Egyptian Government. In the first place, contradictory reports continued to be received regarding the fate of General Hicks's army, and, indeed, some weeks elapsed before all doubts as to the occurrence of the disaster were removed. In the second place, it was necessary to consult the military authorities, who naturally required time to study the facts of the case before expressing any opinion as to the course to be adopted. In the third place, I wished to give the Egyptian Government time in order to see whether they would be able to devise any practicable policy of their own.

The first decision at which the Egyptian Government arrived was "to try and hold Khartoum, and to reopen the route between Suakin and Berber." In reporting this decision to Lord Granville, on November 23, I said that "according to several telegrams received from Khartoum, there appeared to be a general opinion on the spot that it would be impossible to hold the town, and that it would be necessary to fall back on Berber."

On November 26, Colonel Coetlogon, an officer of General Hicks's army who had remained at Khartoum, telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Wood in the following terms: "I think it right to let you know the situation. Khartoum and Sennar cannot be held. In two months' time, there will be no food. All supplies are cut off. To save what remains of the army in the Soudan, a retreat on Berber should be made at once, and, by a combined movement from Berber and Suakin, that route should be opened. Reinforcements arriving could not reach Khartoum except by land, and for that a very large force is necessary. . . . The troops that are left are the refuse of the army, mostly old and blind. Again I say, the only way of saving what remains is to attempt a general retreat on Berber. This is the real state of affairs here, and I beg of you to impress it on His Highness the Khedive."

By December 3, I had obtained the views of the principal British military authorities in Cairo, and I was able to report to Lord Granville on the situation. "The most important question for the moment," I said, "is to know whether the Egyptian Government will be able to maintain themselves at Khartoum. I have had the advantage of fully discussing this question with General Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and General Baker.[1] All these high military authorities are of one opinion. They consider that, if the Mahdi advances, it will be impossible for the Egyptian Government to hold Khartoum, I mean, of course, with any forces of which they now dispose, or are likely to dispose. I leave out of account the contingency of despatching forces to Khartoum belonging either to Her Majesty the Queen or His Imperial Majesty the Sultan. Your Lordship has informed me that Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to send English or Indian troops to the Soudan. I will not now attempt to discuss the possible contingency of troops belonging to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan being sent to the Soudan. The adoption of this last-named measure involves serious political considerations, which I must leave to the appreciation of Her Majesty's Government.

---

[1] Sir Frederick Stephenson then commanded the British army of occupation. General Baker left for Suakin during the course of these discussions. He did not see my despatch before he left Cairo. I, therefore, wrote to him with a view to ascertaining whether I had rightly interpreted the opinions which he had expressed to me verbally. He replied on January 7, 1884, in the following terms: "1. I did not believe that, without the aid of exterior power, Egypt could reconquer or hold the Soudan. 2. I believed that the loss of the Soudan would be a disastrous blow to Egypt, and that the expenditure necessary for the defence of Egypt proper would be ruinous to her financially in the future, and far in excess of the sum which the Soudan had cost in the past. 3. I thought it necessary that both England and Egypt should immediately adopt a definite policy, and that the latter should prepare to withdraw from the Soudan, unless England could afford such aid as would enable her to recover it and hold it." This, of course, really meant that General Baker wished the British Government to undertake the reconquest of the Soudan.

"The reasons which have led General Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and General Baker to the conclusions that, if the Mahdi advances, it will be impossible for the Egyptian Government to hold Khartoum are that the garrison is demoralised, that they have little or no confidence in the fighting qualities of the soldiers, that the Egyptian Government have no adequate reinforcements to send, and that the difficulty of provisioning the place, whether from the north or the south, is very great, as are also the difficulties of maintaining a line of communications. It is also very doubtful whether General Baker will be able by force to open up the Suakin-Berber route.[1] . . . General Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood are of opinion that if the Egyptian Government be left to rely exclusively on their own resources, and the Mahdi advances, Khartoum must fall. They think that an endeavour should be made to open out the Berber-Suakin route, not because the mere establishment of communication between those two points will enable the Egyptian Government, with the forces at their disposal, to hold Khartoum, but because the success of General Baker's undertaking will afford the best hope of retreat to the garrisons of Khartoum and the immediate neighbourhood.

"If Khartoum is abandoned, they think that the whole valley of the Nile down to Wadi Halfa or thereabouts will probably be lost to the Egyptian Government.

---

[1] General Baker's expedition to Suakin will be described in a subsequent chapter.

"I have dwelt especially on the opinions of General Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood, because, as they have seen this despatch, I am confident that I am rightly interpreting their views. I may, however, add that I have gathered, in communication with Baker Pasha, that his views on the military situation do not differ materially from those of General Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood.

"My own views on the points which I have so far discussed are, relatively speaking, of little value. But I should wish to say that, in view of the facts with which we have to deal, it appears to me scarcely possible to arrive at any other conclusions than those of General Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood. Their views are also shared by Mr. Clifford Lloyd,[1] who has been present at many of our discussions.

"I need hardly say that these views are, not unnaturally, very unpalatable to the Egyptian Government. I hardly think that Chérif Pasha believes that he will be able to hold Khartoum if the Mahdi advances, but neither he nor his colleagues can make up their minds to abandoning it."

Whilst this despatch was on its way to London, daily discussions took place in Cairo about the policy which was to be pursued. It became clearer every day that, if the Egyptian Government were left to themselves, they would never decide upon any definite and practicable policy. On December 10, I sent the following private telegram to Lord Granville: "I have not telegraphed for fresh instructions as I thought it useless to do so until events had developed somewhat, and I had something definite to recommend. But it is quite clear to me that more definite instructions must shortly be sent as to the attitude of Her Majesty's Government and as to the advice to be given to the Egyptian Government. At present, they are drifting on without any very definite or practical plan of action, and will continue to do so unless they are told what course to pursue." This was followed, on December 12, by an official telegram in which I informed Lord Granville that Chérif Pasha had called upon me and informed me that "the Khedive had held a Council of Ministers and that they had resolved to place themselves absolutely in the hands of Her Majesty's Government." The Egyptian Government thought that the best solution of the question was to invite the aid of the Sultan. They wished the British Government to arrange the conditions under which Turkish aid would be afforded, the principal of these conditions being that the Sultan's troops should leave the country when their presence was no longer required. Chérif Pasha pointed out that as the rebellion in the Soudan was a religious movement, it would probably gather strength if British or Indian troops were employed.

---

[1] Mr. Clifford Lloyd had been sent to Egypt to reorganise the Department of the Interior.

On December 13, Lord Granville replied in the following terms: "Her Majesty's Government have no intention of employing British or Indian troops in the Soudan. Her Majesty's Government have no objection to offer to the employment of Turkish troops, provided they are paid by the Turkish Government, and that such employment be restricted exclusively to the Soudan, with their base at Suakin. Excepting for securing the safe retreat of the garrisons still holding positions in the Soudan, Her Majesty's Government cannot agree to increasing the burden on the Egyptian revenues by expenditure for operations which, even if successful, and this is not probable, would be of doubtful advantage to Egypt. Her Majesty's Government recommend the Ministers of the Khedive to come to an early decision to abandon all territory south of Assouan, or, at least, of Wadi Halfa. They will be prepared to assist in maintaining order in Egypt proper, and in defending it, as well as the ports of the Red Sea."

On December 16, I informed Lord Granville that I had communicated to Chérif Pasha the leading features of the policy of the British Government in respect to Soudan affairs. Chérif Pasha told me that he saw considerable objections to the abandonment of the territory south of Wadi Halfa. He promised that he would communicate to me a written Memorandum on the subject. On December 22, Chérif Pasha gave me this Memorandum. The Egyptian Government, it was said, "cannot agree to the abandonment of territories which they consider absolutely necessary for the security, and even for the existence, of Egypt itself." Chérif Pasha reiterated his proposal that Turkish troops should be sent under conditions to be negotiated in concert with the British Government.

The impression left on my mind during the course of these discussions was that the Egyptian Government were only half in earnest in their desire to invoke Turkish aid. My belief at the time was that they wished to use the suggestion about the employment of Turkish troops as an instrument by which to force the hand of the British Government, and oblige the latter to employ British troops. Moreover, the condition laid down by the British Government to the effect that the Ottoman Treasury should bear the cost of the expedition, was practically prohibitive. In telegraphing the substance of Chérif Pasha's note to Lord Granville, I, therefore, added the following remarks: "If negotiations are commenced with the Porte on the basis of the latter paying, they are, I conceive, almost certain to fail. I believe that the policy recommended by Her Majesty's Government is, on the whole, the best of which the very difficult circumstances admit. . . . No amount of argument or persuasion will make the present Ministry adopt the policy of abandonment. The only way in which it can be carried out is for me to inform the Khedive that Her Majesty's Government insist on its adoption, and that if the present Ministers will not carry it out, he must name others who will do so. Further, I am not sure that any Egyptian Ministers can be found who will be willing to carry out the policy, and capable of doing so. If, therefore, it is forced on the Egyptian Government, Her Majesty's Government must be prepared to face the possible contingency of appointing English Ministers temporarily."

Some delay ensued before any answer was sent to this telegram. In the interval, Chérif Pasha presented me, on January 2, 1884, with a further Note. In this Note, it was stated that the Egyptian Government proposed to apply to the Porte for 10,000 men. In the event of their request being refused, they wished to restore the Eastern Soudan and the ports of the Red Sea to the Sultan, and to endeavour with their own resources to hold the valley of the Nile up to Khartoum. In forwarding this proposal to Lord Granville, I said: "I can only say that I entirely disbelieve that any Egyptian force, which can be got together, will be capable of defending the whole length of the valley of the Nile from Khartoum downwards."

On January 4, I received Lord Granville's reply. It was to the effect that the British Government had no objection to the Sultan being asked to send troops to Suakin provided that there was no increase of Egyptian expenditure, and provided also that the decision to be taken by the Egyptian Government as regards its own movements was not retarded. Her Majesty's Government concurred in the proposal that, in the event of the Sultan declining to send troops, the administration of the shores of the Red Sea and of the Eastern Soudan should be given back to the Porte. As regards the suggestion that, with the frontiers thus reduced, the Egyptian Government should endeavour to hold the Nile up to Khartoum, Her Majesty's Government, it was said, "do not believe it to be possible for Egypt to defend Khartoum, and whilst recommending the concentration of the Egyptian troops, they desire that those forces should be withdrawn from Khartoum itself, as well as from the interior of the Soudan, and you will so inform Chérif Pasha."

Simultaneously with this telegram, a further confidential message was sent to me for use should occasion require. It was to the following effect: "It is essential that in important questions affecting the administration and safety of Egypt, the advice of Her Majesty's Government should be followed, as long as the provisional occupation continues. Ministers and Governors must carry out this advice or forfeit their offices. The appointment of English Ministers would be most objectionable, but it will no doubt be possible to find Egyptians who will execute the Khedive's orders under English advice. The Cabinet will give you full support."

On communicating the views of the British Government to Chérif Pasha, I found, as I had anticipated, a strong determination to reject the policy of withdrawal from Khartoum. I was, therefore, obliged to make use of the instructions contained in Lord Granville's confidential telegram.[1] The result was that, on January 7, Chérif Pasha tendered his resignation to the Khedive.

My position at this moment was one of considerable difficulty. The policy of withdrawal from the Soudan was very unpopular in Egypt. Riaz Pasha was asked to form a Ministry, but declined to accept the task. A rumour reached me that I should be told that no Ministry could be formed to carry out the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan; thus, it was hoped, the hand of the British Government would be forced, and Chérif Pasha would of necessity have returned to office to carry out his own policy. I had warned the British Government that they might have to face the possibility of nominating English Ministers. This, however, they were unwilling to do. My instructions were to get an Egyptian Ministry appointed. If, however, no Egyptian Ministry could be formed to carry out the policy recommended by the British Government, I intended to take the government temporarily into my own hands, and then telegraph to London for instructions. The Egyptians had, I know, some inkling of what was likely to happen, as, without making any official or private communication to the Ministers, I purposely allowed my intention to be known. The Khedive became alarmed at the prospect of my programme being carried into execution. He, therefore, decided to yield. On the night of January 7, he sent for me and informed me that he had accepted the resignation of his Ministers, and had sent for Nubar Pasha. He added that he "accepted cordially the policy of abandoning the whole of the Soudan, which, on mature reflection, he believed to be the best in the interests of the country." On January 8, I was able to telegraph to Lord Granville that Nubar Pasha had consented to form a Ministry, and that "he entirely concurred in the wisdom of abandoning the Soudan, retaining possession of Suakin."

---

[1] Although I was unable to agree with Chérif Pasha about Soudan affairs, my personal relations with him during all this period were excellent. On the day following his resignation, he dined at my house, to the great astonishment of all the gossips of Cairo.

Thus the general policy, which was to be pursued, was definitely settled. It was, indeed, high time to come to some decision. Mr. Power telegraphed from Khartoum on December 30: "The state of affairs here is very desperate." On January 7, Colonel Coetlogon telegraphed to the Khedive: "I would strongly urge on Your Highness the great necessity for an immediate order for retreat being given. Were we twice as strong as we are, we could not hold Khartoum against the whole country, which, without a doubt, are one and all against us."

Few measures have formed the subject of more severe criticism than the policy adopted by Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1883-84 in connection with the Soudan. On February 12, 1884, a vote of censure on the Government was moved by Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords and by Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of Commons. It was couched in the following terms: "That this House . . . is of opinion that the recent lamentable events in the Soudan are due in a great measure to the vacillating and inconsistent policy pursued by Her Majesty's Government." Care was evidently taken not to base the attack on the Government upon any specific objections to the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan. Lord Salisbury, indeed, said: "We may think it was a right policy to maintain the Soudan, or we may think it was a right policy to abandon it; but we must, whatever opinion we hold, condemn the policy of the Government." Looking back on what occurred, and making allowance for the fact that the necessities of party warfare often involve an expression of condemnation or of approval in somewhat exaggerated terms, it must be admitted that the censure, which the leading Conservative statesmen wished to pass on the Government, though severe, was not altogether undeserved. Unquestionably, the state of affairs, which then existed in the Soudan, was in some measure due to the policy of the British Government. But if we inquire in what measure it was due to that policy, the answer is clear. The British Government could have used their paramount influence in Egypt to stop the departure of General Hicks's expedition, and they did not do so. Had they done so, it is not only possible but also probable that the advance of the Mahdi would have been arrested at Khartoum. Putting aside points of detail, that is the sum total of the charge which can be brought against Mr. Gladstone's Government. I do not know of any answer to this charge save that which is contained in the commonplace, but extremely true remark that it is easy to be wise after the event.[1]

Turning to the criticisms made, not so much by responsible party leaders as by the general public, it is to be observed that the view which was at the time freely expressed, and which has to some extent floated down the tide of history, was that the British Government were responsible for the relapse of the Soudan into barbarism, and that not only might that country have been preserved to Egypt, but that it would have been so preserved had the Egyptian Government been allowed to follow their own devices. General Gordon did a good deal to propagate this idea. His Journal abounds with statements fixing the responsibility for the abandonment of the Soudan on the British Government. I maintain that this view is entirely erroneous. Save in respect to one sin of omission, that is to say, that no veto was imposed on the Hicks expedition, the British Government were in no way responsible for the loss of the Soudan. They were responsible for obliging the Egyptian Government to look the facts fairly in the face. Now the main fact was this,—that after the defeat of General Hicks's army, the Soudan was lost to Egypt beyond any hope of recovery, unless some external aid could be obtained to effect its reconquest. That external aid could only come from two countries, England or Turkey. The British Government decided that the troops of Great Britain should not be used to reconquer the Soudan. This decision was ratified by British public opinion, neither am I aware that any one, who could speak with real authority on the subject, was at the time found to challenge its wisdom. It must be borne in mind that, if British troops had been sent to the Soudan in 1883, they would have been obliged to stay there in considerable numbers. The Egyptian Government could not, with their own resources, have held the country even after the forces of the Mahdi had been defeated. The conditions of the problem which awaited solution were, therefore, essentially different from those which obtained some thirteen years later when the reconquest of the Soudan was taken in hand. Turning to the other alternative, it may be said that, although the proposal to utilise the Sultan's services gave occasion to some diplomatic trifling, no one seriously wished Turkish troops to be employed. Every one felt that the remedy would be worse than the disease. The Egyptian Government, as in the days of Arábi, were afraid that if

---

[1] Mr. Morley (*Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 72) very appropriately prefaces his chapter on Egypt by the following characteristic remark made by the Duke of Wellington: "I find many very ready to say what I ought to have done when a battle is over; but I wish some of these persons would come and tell me what to do before the battle."

Turkish troops once came into the country, they would not leave it again. The British Government gave a half-hearted assent to the employment of a Turkish force, but coupled their assent with conditions which were impossible of execution. Even supposing that the Sultan would have been able to reconquer the country, which is a bold assumption, it was notorious that the misgovernment of Turkish Pashas had caused the rebellion, and it might be safely predicted that, whatever temporary success might be gained, no permanent settlement could be hoped for if Turkish authority were re-established. It must also be remembered that to take so important a step as that of immediately sending troops to the Soudan would have been quite inconsistent with the character of the Sultan. It is highly improbable that he would have consented to render any prompt and effective assistance. For all these reasons, it cannot be doubted that the decision not to call in Turkish aid was wise.[1]

---

[1] About four years later, the question of handing over Suakin to the Turks was again raised. I did not like the proposal, but the difficulties of the whole Egyptian situation were at that time so great, that I was rather disposed to support it, as a choice of evils. Lord Salisbury, however—very wisely, I think—rejected the idea, and, as subsequent events proved, it was fortunate that he did so. His opinion was conveyed to me in the following very characteristic letter, dated December 22, 1888: "At first, your proposal to hand over Suakin to the Turk seemed to me very alluring. It would be such a blessing to be rid of it, both for Egypt and for us; and in the light of that hope, the conditions which it would be necessary to obtain from the Turks did not seem insuperable obstacles, but only difficulties to be overcome. But as time went on—and especially after we had been able to watch the impression caused by Grenfell's easy success—we felt the task was not so easy. It is as material that we should look at the matter from an English, as that you should look at it from an Egyptian point of view. Unluckily, the English point of view is not only in practice the most important, but it is also the most difficult to understand. The misfortune—the root-difficulty—we have in dealing with questions like those which beset Egypt is that public opinion in its largest sense takes no note of them. Unless some startling question appealing to their humanity arises, the constituencies are quite indifferent. The result is that the Members of the House of Commons are each like a ship without an anchor. They drift as any chance current may drive them. Yet the combined resultant of

If, therefore, neither British nor Turkish troops were to be employed, withdrawal from the Soudan was imposed on the Egyptian Government as an unavoidable although unpleasant necessity. This, in fact, was the conclusion to which all the responsible authorities on the spot arrived at different stages of the proceedings. I have already given the opinions expressed by Lord Dufferin,

their many drifting wills is omnipotent and without appeal. If they vote wrong on an Irish question, a hint from their electoral supporters will bring them right. If they vote wrong on an Egyptian question, there is no such appeal. The result is that we are at the mercy of any fortuitous concurrence of fanaticisms or fads that chance may direct against us. This preamble is necessary to enable you to understand the importance I attach to the next remark: if we withdrew our own and the Egyptian troops from Suakin in favour of Turkey, we should be assailed by three separate feelings—the Turcophobists, still very strong; the military or jingo feeling, which simply desires to annex, and objects to evacuating in all cases; and the curious collection of fanatics who believe that by some magic wave of the diplomatic wand the Soudan can be turned into a second India. The superficial philanthropy of the day runs in this channel, and by its side, as is often the case, a current of decided roguery. There are promoters, and financiers, and contractors of various kinds, who know perfectly well that there is as much chance of colonising the Sahara as the Soudan, but who see a prospect of sweeping a shoal of guileless shareholders into their net, and are longing to take advantage of the prevailing delusion. All these people would grumble fiercely if we gave Suakin to the Turks; but if we could have done with it, the riddance would be well worth a few grumbles. But the Turks would commit every possible blunder. They would oppress the Arabs, destroy all possibility of any trade, except the Slave Trade, to which they would give every facility; and, having caused the hostility of the natives to the utmost by taxation and misgovernment, would allow the garrison of Suakin to fall into so weak a state in regard to command, numbers, and equipment, that some fine day a lieutenant of the Khalifa would rush the fortresses. If such a thing happened, the combined forces to which I have referred would have their opportunity. They would dominate the House of Commons. The political air would be rent with tales of the inefficiency and the brutality of the Turks, and with praises of the virtues of the Soudanese, only requiring Home Rule under the ægis of Great Britain to develop them into an equatorial Arcadia. The whole evil would be attributed to the evacuation, which must be immediately reversed. I need not go any farther. There would be endless complications with foreign Powers, and a great deal of waste of blood and money with no result. It might go much farther still, for there is a good deal of loose powder about on the shores of the Red Sea. On these grounds alone, we have come to the conclusion that a Turkish occupation presents more dangers than advantages."

Sir Edward Malet, and Colonel Stewart prior to the occurrence of the Hicks disaster, and those of Sir Frederick Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, General Baker, and myself expressed subsequent to that event. Sir Auckland Colvin, who knew Egypt well, wrote to me from India, in December 1883, advocating the policy of abandoning the Soudan. Mr. Power, also, put the matter in homely and forcible language. Writing to his mother on February 9, 1884, he said: "Holding Khartoum is bosh. . . . This is, indeed, a 'land of desolation,' as Baker called it. We must give it up." I would now speak of the opinions of General Gordon. Colonel Stewart was, I think, a better authority on Soudan affairs, as they then existed, than General Gordon; but the public attached great weight to General Gordon's opinions. What, therefore, were those opinions?

General Gordon so frequently expressed at short intervals opinions which were opposed to each other, that it is not easy to answer this question with confidence. In a pamphlet issued by the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885 and entitled *Too Late*, it was stated that General Gordon's "personal views as to the impolicy of abandoning Khartoum were notorious"; and in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 11, 1884, an account is given of an interview between General Gordon and a representative of that newspaper. General Gordon is alleged to have condemned the policy of evacuation. "You must either," he said, "surrender absolutely to the Mahdi or defend Khartoum at all hazards." I do not call in question the fact that General Gordon used language of this sort, but it was certainly opposed both to what he wrote about the same time officially, and to what he said when he was on the point of starting for Khartoum.

On January 22, 1884, whilst on his way to Egypt, General Gordon wrote a Memorandum which he sent to Lord Granville, and in which the following passage occurs: "The Soudan is a useless possession, ever was so, and ever will be so. . . . I think Her Majesty's Government are fully justified in recommending the evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary towards securing a good government would be far too onerous to admit of such an attempt being made." Colonel Stewart, after reading General Gordon's Memorandum, wrote as follows: "I have carefully read over General Gordon's observations and cordially agree with what he states. . . . I quite agree with General Gordon that the Soudan is an expensive and useless possession. No one who has visited it can escape the reflection: 'What a useless possession and what a huge encumbrance on Egypt.'"

Further evidence can be produced, which is even more conclusive as regards General Gordon's views. When he arrived in Cairo in January 1884, I had to prepare certain instructions for him. One passage of those instructions ran as follows: "You will bear in mind that the main end to be pursued is the evacuation of the Soudan. This policy was adopted after very full discussion by the Egyptian Government on the advice of Her Majesty's Government. I understand, also, that you entirely concur in the desirability of adopting this policy." When I went through the draft instructions with General Gordon, I well remember stopping at this passage and asking him whether I was right in saying that he agreed in the policy adopted by the Egyptian Government on the advice of the British Government. Without the smallest hesitation, General Gordon expressed in the strongest terms his entire concurrence in that policy. Indeed, he insisted that a phrase should be added stating that in his opinion the policy, which had been adopted, "should on no account be changed." This was accordingly done.

It seems to me that this evidence is conclusive. I think that I have every right to assume that when General Gordon, at a momentous period of his life, gave his opinion deliberately in official form, and with a due sense of the responsibility he was taking, what he then said must be regarded as his true opinion, and that it cannot be gainsaid by any *obiter dicta* let fall in conversation at other times.

Mere appeal to authority is, however, a weak argument. Reason, it has been truly said, and not authority, should determine the judgment. I maintain that, judged by the standard of reason, the arguments in favour of the policy adopted at the time are irrefragable. I am, of course, merely speaking of the general policy, not of the details of its execution, in respect to which, as I shall subsequently show, many errors were committed. The only practical question was, not whether it was or was not desirable to hold Khartoum, but whether it was possible to hold Khartoum. To this question there could only be one answer. The Egyptian Government, with the resources of which they disposed, were unable to hold Khartoum. No one, therefore, has a right to criticise the policy which was actually adopted, unless he is prepared to advocate that the reconquest of the Soudan should have been effected by British, British-Indian, or Turkish troops. For my own part, I may say that, although during the period I represented the British Government in Egypt I may have made many mistakes, there is one episode to which I look back without the least sense of personal regret. Time and reflection have only served to convince me more strongly than ever that I acted rightly in advocating withdrawal from the Soudan in 1883-84. It was the adoption of that policy which allowed the Egyptian and British Governments, after a painful period of transition, to devote themselves to the work of reorganisation and reform in Egypt proper, a work which could not have been undertaken at that time with any prospect of success so long as the Soudan hung like a dead-weight round the necks of Egyptian reformers. Whatever else may be said against the Egyptian policy of Mr. Gladstone's Government, my conviction is that they deserve the eternal gratitude of the Egyptian people for coming down with a heavy hand on all the vacillations of the Cairene administrators, and obliging the Egyptian Government to look the facts of the case fairly in the face.[1]

There is, however, another criticism which was directed against the conduct of the British Government at this time and to which some allusion should be made. It was stated that, even suppos-

---

[1] In a private letter to me, dated December 28, 1883, Lord Granville stated the case in characteristic language. "It takes away," he said, "somewhat of the position of a man to sell his racers and hunters, but if he cannot afford to keep them, the sooner they go to Tattersall's the better." I have a large number of private letters from Lord Granville. Some of them are very interesting. His light touches on serious questions were inimitable, and his good humour and kindness of heart come out in every line he wrote. It was possible to disagree with him, but it was impossible to be angry with him. It was also impossible to get him to give a definite answer to a difficult question when he wished not to commit himself. His power of eluding the main point at issue was quite extraordinary. Often did I think that he was on the horns of a dilemma, and that he was in a position from which no escape was possible without the expression of a definite opinion. I was generally mistaken. With a smile and a quick little epigrammatic phrase, Lord Granville would elude one's grasp and be off without giving any opinion at all. I remember on one occasion pressing him to say what he wished me to do about one of the numerous offshoots of the general tangle, which formed the Egyptian Question. The matter was one of considerable importance. All I could extract from him was the Delphic saying that my "presence in London would be a good excuse for a dawdle."

I remember once comparing notes with Lord Goschen on this subject. He told me that on one occasion, when he was at Constantinople, after many unsuccessful endeavours to obtain definite ing that withdrawal from the Soudan was necessary, the policy of the Government should not have been publicly announced. This view was advocated by Lord Salisbury. Speaking in the House of Lords on February 27, 1885, he said : "As soon as they (the British Government) made up their minds that the Soudan was to be evacuated, their first course was to retire the garrisons as rapidly as they could, and when this was done they might announce their policy as loudly as they please. But it was an unfortunate announcement when the men were in deadly danger, — a policy of crass folly, which almost amounts to a crime." This criticism, though strongly expressed, sounds reasonable in substance; and, in fact, if the policy advocated by Lord Salisbury had been possible, it would unquestionably have been the best to pursue. Can any one, however, suppose that, when the British press and the British Parliament were actively engaged in discussing Egyptian

---

answers to certain important questions which he had addressed to Lord Granville, he wrote a very lengthy and very strong private letter, intimating that unless clear answers were sent, he would resign. The only reply he received from Lord Granville was as follows: "My dear Goschen—Thank you a thousand times for expressing your views so frankly to your old colleagues." The dawdling policy, or, to put the case in another way, the policy of not having a policy at all, is often very good diplomacy, particularly when it is carried out by a man of Lord Granville's singular tact, quickness, and diplomatic experience. This line of action, which involves delaying any important decision until the last moment and not looking far ahead, is rather in conformity with English customs and habits of thought. It was generally practised by many of the English statesmen and diplomatists of Lord Granville's generation. Unfortunately, Lord Granville, during the latter portion of his career, fell on times when, under the auspices of Prince Bismarck, a directness, I might almost say a brutality, had been introduced into European diplomacy, which did not exist before. Lord Granville always seemed to me to make the mistake of confounding the cases in which the dawdling *laissez-faire* policy was wise, with those in which it was necessary to take time by the forelock and have a clearly defined policy at an early date. This, in a Foreign Minister, is a great fault. He becomes to too great a degree the sport of circumstances, and inspires foreign Governments with a belief that the policy of his country is vacillating and uncertain.

affairs, when keen party opponents were constantly pressing the Government for a declaration of their intentions, when Cairo was full of newspaper correspondents, when the policy of withdrawal could only be enforced by the heroic remedy of a change of Ministry in Egypt, when it is remembered that such a thing as official secrecy is almost unknown in Egypt, and when it is further remembered that numerous agents, some of whom, especially General Gordon himself,[1] were not remarkable for reticence of speech, necessarily had to be taken into the confidence of the Government,—can any one suppose for one moment that, under all these circumstances, the adoption of a policy of withdrawal could have been kept secret? Secrecy was, in fact, impossible, and it mattered little whether any public announcement was or was not made, at all events in Europe or in Egypt proper.

This, therefore, is all I have to say about the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan. In spite of the vehemence with which every one connected with the adoption of this policy was at one time assailed, I believe it to have been the only wise policy possible under the circumstances. Further, in spite of some obvious drawbacks, and of many mistakes in the execution, I believe the adoption of this policy to have been beneficial to Egypt itself and to the accomplishment of the general aims of England in that country. If I am asked whether the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan was desirable or the reverse, and, if undesirable, why it was adopted, I have no hesitation in answering these questions. As a mere academic question, I think that the policy of withdrawing from Khartoum was undesirable, but I decline to consider that, in view of the circumstances which then existed, the question of the desirability or undesirability of withdrawal was at the time one of any practical importance. A long course of misgovernment had culminated in a rebellion in the Soudan, which the Egyptian Government were powerless to repress. They, therefore, had to submit to the time-honoured law expressed in the words *Vae victis.* The abandonment of the Soudan, however undesirable, was imposed upon the Egyptian Government as an unpleasant but imperious necessity for the simple reason that, after the destruction of General Hicks's army, they were unable to keep it. This, as it appears to me, is the residuum of truth which may be extracted from all the very lengthy and somewhat stormy discussions which have taken place on this subject.

---

[1] It will presently be explained (pp. 467-471) that General Gordon was himself responsible for spreading in the Soudan the news that the Egyptian Government intended to withdraw from the country.

# CHAPTER XXI

## THE REBELLION IN THE EASTERN SOUDAN

### August 1883–March 1884

Prevailing discontent—Annihilation of a force sent to Sinkat—And of one sent to Tokar—Defeat of the Egyptians at Tamanieb—It is decided to send the Gendarmerie and some black troops under Zobeir Pasha to Suakin—Instructions to General Baker—He arrives at Suakin—His instructions are modified—Zobeir Pasha retained at Cairo—General Baker advances to Tokar—His defeat—Fall of Sinkat—It is decided to send a British force to Tokar—Fall of Tokar—General Graham advances—Action at El Teb—The British troops return to Suakin—Battle of Tamai—Results of the operations.

The events already narrated could not fail to have a great effect in the Eastern Soudan. There also a long course of misgovernment had produced its natural result. The people were ripe for rebellion against the Egyptian Government. When, therefore, towards the middle of 1883, the Mahdi issued a Proclamation to the inhabitants of the Eastern Soudan, inviting them "to advance against the Turks and drive them out of the country," they were well disposed to respond to his appeal. A former slave-dealer at Suakin, named Osman Digna, was appointed to be the Mahdi's Emir. He was a man of considerable ability, and was destined in the near future to play a leading part in the affairs of the Eastern Soudan.

At this time, an Egyptian garrison was posted at Sinkat, a spot situated about fifty miles from

Suakin. The road from Suakin to Sinkat passes through some rocky defiles, which present great facilities for defence against any force advancing from the coast. The geographical position of Sinkat renders it devoid of military importance. A wise foresight would have dictated its abandonment and the retreat of the garrison to Suakin at an early stage of the rebellion. Unfortunately, this was not done ; the result was disastrous. The garrison of Sinkat was commanded by Tewfik Bey, an officer of courage and ability, who is described by Mrs. Sartorius as "the one grand and noble man who stands forth so prominently amongst the horde of Egyptian officials."[1]

The first overt act of rebellion took place on August 5. On that day, Osman Digna appeared with 1500 men before Sinkat and demanded, in the name of the Mahdi, that both Sinkat and Suakin should be delivered up to him. These demands being refused, Osman Digna attacked the outskirts of Sinkat. He was repulsed with considerable loss. Two of his nephews were killed, and he was himself wounded.

On September 9, Tewfik Bey again defeated the rebels at Handoub, a spot on the road leading from Suakin to Berber.

These successes were, however, but the prelude to a series of disasters which were about to befall the Egyptian arms. Towards the middle of October, a force of about 160 men sent by Suleiman Pasha, the Governor of Suakin, to the relief of Sinkat, was attacked and totally defeated by the Dervishes. The women and children, who accompanied the soldiers, alone escaped to become the slaves of their captors.

---

[1] *The Soudan*, p. 61. Mrs. Sartorius was the wife of Colonel Sartorius, who was General Baker's principal staff officer. She accompanied her husband to Suakin.

The result of this engagement was to increase the prestige of the Mahdi and of Osman Digna, and to encourage amongst their followers the belief that they were fighting in a cause which would render them invincible. Another event soon followed tending in the same direction.

On November 3, an Egyptian force of about 550 men was despatched from Suakin to Trinkitat, a seaport lying about forty-five miles to the south. The object of this expedition was to relieve Tokar, situated some twenty miles from the coast, which place was at that time invested by the Mahdist forces. Captain Moncrieff, R.N., the British Consul at Jeddah, accompanied the expedition. The force left Trinkitat on the morning of November 4. After marching for about an hour and a half, they were attacked by the Dervishes. "The Egyptian troops formed square, the front and right of the square commenced firing, but by some means the left of the square was broken into by eight or ten Arabs, which immediately created a panic amongst the troops and caused a general stampede." In this action, Captain Moncrieff and 160 Egyptian officers and men were killed. The attacking force only amounted to about 200 men.

A worse disaster was to follow. Suleiman Pasha and Mahmoud Tahir Pasha, who commanded the troops at Suakin, were fearful of the effect which would be produced at Cairo when the news arrived of the recent defeat near Tokar. They were aware that an expedition was to be sent from Cairo to Suakin under the command of General Baker. They determined, therefore, "to try another throw of the dice with a fine regiment of 600 Soudanese, under Major Kassim, that had been hurriedly sent from Massowah." This regiment was attacked and cut to pieces. Of the whole force, only 2 officers and 33 men returned to Suakin.

These successive victories established the power of Osman Digna in the Eastern Soudan. On November 19, 1883, I telegraphed to Lord Granville: "It is clear that Egyptian authority in the Eastern Soudan does not extend beyond the coast, and is even threatened there."

After the defeat of General Hicks's army, the military authorities at Cairo were of opinion that an endeavour should be made to open out the Berber-Suakin route with a view to facilitating the retreat of the garrison of Khartoum. The question then arose as to what troops should be employed to attain this object.

The British Government objected to the employment of the Egyptian army, then being organised by Sir Evelyn Wood. There were valid grounds for their objection. The army was intended for service in Egypt proper. Its organisation was at that time defective. None of the men had served for more than one year. Sir Evelyn Wood and the officers serving under him had not as yet had time to fashion into shape the raw material at their disposal. The employment of the Egyptian army might not improbably have led to a further disaster. The British War Office authorities felt this so strongly that, at a subsequent period when British troops were employed, they declined to allow any portion of the Egyptian army to take part in the expedition.

Under these circumstances, the only force available was the Egyptian Gendarmerie commanded by General Baker. A few British officers were attached to this force, but with, I think, one exception (Colonel Sartorius), they were not on the active list of the British army, and it was held, perhaps somewhat illogically, that the Egyptian Government possessed a greater degree of liberty of action in respect to the employment of this force than was the case in respect to the army. The Gendarmerie were fairly well equipped, but, with the exception of some 200 Turks, who were good soldiers, the force was composed of bad fighting material.

It was with the utmost hesitation that I consented to the despatch of General Baker's force to Suakin. I was under no delusion as to the quality of the troops which he would command. Moreover, I feared that Baker Pasha would be led into the committal of some rash act. He was a gallant officer, and it was certain that his military instincts would revolt at inaction, more especially when Sinkat and Tokar were being beleaguered in the immediate vicinity of Suakin. There were also special reasons which made me doubtful as to the wisdom of sending General Baker. He had been obliged to leave the British army under circumstances on which it is unnecessary to dwell. He was ardently attached to his profession, and it was well known that the main object of his life was to regain his position in the British army, which he hoped to do by distinguished service in the field. Before he left Cairo, I impressed upon him strongly that the necessity of avoiding any disaster must come before all other considerations, and that if he did not feel sufficient confidence in his troops to advance, he must remain and defend Suakin, however painful the consequences might be as regards the garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar. General Baker expressed to me his entire concurrence in these views, and promised that he would act up to them. I was not, however, content with mere verbal instructions. On the advice of Sir Evelyn Wood and myself, a letter, which contained the following passage, was written to General Baker by the Khedive on December 17: "The mission entrusted to you, having as its object the pacification of the regions designated in my above-mentioned order, and the maintenance, as far as possible, of communication between Berber and Suakin, I wish you to act with the greatest prudence on account of the insufficiency of the forces placed under your command.

"I think it would be hazardous to commence any military operations before receiving the reinforcements which shall be sent to you with Zobeir Pasha. . . . If, in the event of the situation improving, you should consider an action necessary, I rely on your prudence and ability not to engage the enemy except under the most favourable conditions. . . . My confidence in your prudence enables me to count upon your conforming to these instructions."

On December 27, General Baker arrived at Suakin. Almost simultaneously with his arrival, the change of Ministry narrated in the last chapter took place at Cairo. The result of this change was the issue, on January 11, 1884, of the following further instructions to General Baker by Sir Evelyn Wood, acting on behalf of the Khedive:—

1. All that portion of your instructions which gives you discretion to open the Suakin-Berber route westward of Sinkat by force, if necessary, is cancelled.

2. If it is absolutely necessary to use force in order to extricate the garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar you can do so, provided you consider your forces sufficient and you may reasonably count on success.

The enforced submission of the men who have been holding out at these two places would be very painful to His Highness the Khedive; but even such a sacrifice is better, in his opinion, than that you and your troops should attempt a task which you cannot fairly reckon to be within your power.

3. You are directed to continue to use every effort possible to open the route up to Berber by diplomatic means.

About this time, another change of importance was made. On December 9, I wrote to Lord Granville: "The Egyptian Government propose to send Zobeir Pasha to Suakin. Your Lordship, without doubt, is aware of Zobeir Pasha's antecedents. He has been intimately connected with the Slave Trade. Under ordinary circumstances, his employment by the Egyptian Government would have been open to considerable objection, and I should have thought it my duty to remonstrate against it. Under present circumstances, however, I have not thought it either necessary or desirable to interfere with the discretion of the Egyptian Government in this matter. Whatever may be Zobeir Pasha's faults, he is said to be a man of great energy and resolution. The Egyptian Government consider that his services may be very useful in commanding the friendly Bedouins who are to be sent to Suakin, and in conducting negotiations with the tribes on the Berber-Suakin route and elsewhere. I may mention that Baker Pasha is anxious to avail himself of Zobeir Pasha's services. Your Lordship will, without doubt, bear in mind that, up to the present time, the whole responsibility for the conduct of affairs in the Soudan has been left to the Egyptian Government. It appears to me that, under present circumstances, it would not have been just, while leaving all the responsibility to the Egyptian Government, to have objected to that Government using their own discretion on such a point as the employment of Zobeir Pasha. I make these remarks as the employment of Zobeir Pasha may not improbably attract attention in England."

Every Englishman is justly proud of the part which his country has borne in the suppression of Slavery and the Slave Trade; few will be disposed to challenge the distinguished part played by the

Anti-Slavery Society in this humane work. The Society, however, is not without its defects. Concentration of thought and action on one subject, together with a certain want of imagination which occasionally characterises the conduct of Englishmen in dealing with foreign affairs and which is perhaps in some degree due to their insular habits of thought, produce their natural effect. The members of the Anti-Slavery Society appear sometimes to be unable to look at any question save from a purely anti-slavery point of view, and, even from that point of view, they are often liable to error through failure to judge accurately of the relative importance of events. It is certain that the action of the Society in connection with Soudan affairs in 1883-84, though well intentioned, was mischievous. The main question, whether from the general or the anti-slavery point of view, was how to quiet the Soudan. The establishment of the Mahdi's domination in that country could not fail to give an impulse to the Slave Trade. Every measure which tended to counteract the Mahdi's authority should, therefore, have been welcomed by the Anti-Slavery Society, even although it might have been open to some objections in detail. The Society failed to see this. They were so taken up with the objections to the detail, that they forgot the main principle. In deference to the opinions which the Society was known to entertain, it was decided not to send Zobeir Pasha to Suakin. The consequences of this decision are thus described by Mrs. Sartorius: "As a matter of fact Zobeir never came down. . . . This was another grand blunder that rendered the Suakin expedition almost hopeless from the first. The black troops required to be led in their own fashion; they had no idea of drill or discipline. There was no time to lick them into shape. With Zobeir Pasha at their head, they would have been formidable antagonists to the Soudanese, and have fought in precisely the same fashion. Without him, they were wasted."

On January 31, telegraphic communication with Suakin was established. General Baker reported that he was at Trinkitat, and hoped to move on the following day to Tokar. Some little delay, however, occurred. On February 2, General Baker telegraphed that he would advance on the morning of the 3rd with 3200 men. "There is," he added, "every chance of success." I awaited the result with anxiety. On the 6th, General Baker telegraphed: "I marched yesterday morning with 3500 men towards Tokar; we met the enemy, after two miles' march, in small numbers, and drove them back about two miles nearer the wells of Teb. On the square being only threatened by a small force of the enemy, certainly less than 1000 strong, the Egyptian troops threw down their arms and ran, carrying away the black troops with them, and allowing themselves to be killed without the slightest resistance. More than 2000 were killed. They fled to Trinkitat. Unfortunately, the Europeans who stood suffered terribly. . . . The troops are utterly untrustworthy except for the defence of earthworks."

I remember the bitter disappointment with which I received this telegram. My worst fears had been realised. General Baker had evidently been led into undertaking a task which was beyond the powers of the inefficient force at his disposal. I remember also that my first impression was that, after the strong manner in which I had spoken to him and after the assurances he had given to me at Cairo, General Baker would reproach himself for having advanced on Tokar. It was with this feeling uppermost in my mind that I at once telegraphed to the Consul at Suakin: "Tell General Baker that I feel sure that he did all that could be done, that he has my entire confidence, and that I shall continue to do all I can to help and support him."

When this matter was subsequently (February 12) discussed in England, Lord Derby, speaking on behalf of the British Government, said: "We may have known—we did know—that the composition of General Baker's force was not very good, but I venture to affirm that nobody supposed that a body of men calling itself a regular army would run away, almost without a shot fired, from half its own number, or less than half, of savages under no discipline whatever. It is a thing, I should imagine, new in war. It is a misfortune, but it is a misfortune for which we, sitting in London, can hardly hold ourselves responsible."

I agree in this view. I do not think that the British Ministers were responsible for the despatch of General Baker's force to Suakin except in so far that, by not offering any other form of assistance, they practically obliged the Egyptian Government either to utilise the Gendarmerie or to remain altogether inactive. Manifestly, they could form no independent opinion of the military value of General Baker's force. The main responsibility, therefore, rests on the authorities at Cairo, and notably on myself.

Mr. Gladstone stated in the House of Commons: "Baker Pasha was under no military necessity to undertake this expedition. He was not enlisted for that purpose, and was under no honourable or military obligation to undertake it unless he thought it hopeful. . . . I say he went with a belief that the means at his command were adequate means for the purpose which he had in view. . . . Baker Pasha stated that he was very confident that the means at his disposal, though not sufficient to relieve all the garrisons, were sufficient for Tokar, which would have been most important. On the 2nd of February, three days before the calamity which overtook him, Baker Pasha telegraphs that he will advance to the relief of Tokar to-morrow with every chance of success." All this is perfectly true. I have heard it stated that General Baker was induced to advance by one of his staff officers against his own judgment. How far this statement is correct, I cannot say. There can, however, be no doubt that he made an error in advancing. He saw the hopelessness of endeavouring to relieve Sinkat,[1] but he was too confident of success in the direction of Tokar.

Whilst, however, the accuracy of Mr. Gladstone's statement may be admitted, he did not, as it appears to me, state the whole case; neither, indeed, was he in possession of sufficient information to have enabled him to do so. Mrs. Sartorius had the best possible opportunities of learning the opinions current amongst the officers at Suakin. This is what she says: "I still say that the military and other authorities at Cairo should not have allowed General Baker to advance; they ought not to have left it to him, for they could not but know that he had no choice." Regarded by the light of subsequent events, there is much force in this criticism. Either General Baker should not have been sent to Suakin, or, if sent, he should have received no discretionary power to advance; in fact, it would have been better that he should have received positive orders not to advance. I was principally responsible for this mistake, that is to say, I could have prevented General Baker from going to Suakin, and, although I knew the risk I was running and although I thought seriously of imposing a veto on the expedition, I eventually decided not to do so. I remember the nature of the arguments which led me to take this decision. I was not influenced by the consideration that General Baker's force would be able to open up the Berber-Suakin route. I never believed that he would be able to do so, and, as has been already stated, this portion of his instructions underwent considerable modifications immediately after the change of Ministry took place in Cairo. The way I reasoned the matter was this: here are two garrisons, one at Sinkat and one at Tokar, shut up within a short distance of the coast; moreover, the administration at Suakin is so bad, and the troops there are so demoralised, that the Egyptian position at Suakin itself may at any moment be endangered; the British Government will not afford any military aid, neither will they allow the Egyptian Government to use their own army; I daresay they are right in these decisions, but the position thus created for the Egyptian Government and its British advisers is, to say the least, a painful one; are we not only to refuse assistance, but are we also to impose a veto on the Egyptian Government employing the only remaining force at their disposal, with the certainty that in doing so Suakin itself will be endangered and that any hope of relieving the beleaguered garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar will have to be abandoned? I answered this question at the time in the negative. Subsequent events showed that I should have answered it in the affirmative. I should have stated the case to the British Government, and have informed them that the Egyptian Government had no trustworthy force at their disposal with which to act, and that they must decide whether or not to defend Suakin, and to send a British force to relieve the two garrisons. It was, however, difficult at the time to take up this line. I felt sure that the British Government would do nothing to help the beleaguered garrisons, although they would have afforded naval protection to Suakin. Indeed, so early as November 23, Admiral Hewett was ordered to maintain Egyptian authority at the Red Sea ports. Moreover, however acute the pressure and however painful the consequences of inaction might be, I sympathised with the reluctance of the British Government to be drawn into military operations in the Soudan. Once begun, it was difficult to say where they would end.

---

[1] "A most painful decision has lately been arrived at, namely, that we ourselves cannot relieve Sinkat, for it would be madness to trust our troops in a broken and mountainous country like that through which the Sinkat road runs. We intend to do what we can in the Tokar direction."—*The Soudan*, p. 210.

Then, again, in view of the instructions, written and verbal, which General Baker had received before leaving Cairo, and in view of the whole tenor of his conversation, I believed that I might rely on him not to advance unless success was well-nigh absolutely certain, and, indeed, I thought it probable that, when he arrived at Suakin and had studied the situation, he would tell me that the risk of advancing either to Sinkat or Tokar with the troops under his command was too great to be undertaken. In reasoning thus, I was mistaken. General Baker's military instincts, the natural reluctance of a gallant officer to leave the beleaguered garrisons to their fate without making an effort to help them, the pressure which was probably brought to bear on him by the younger and less responsible British officers at Suakin to advance, and the special personal inducement which existed in his case to distinguish himself by heading a daring and successful military exploit, all acted in a sense contrary to the conclusions formed when discussing the matter calmly in my room at Cairo.

For these reasons, I think I was wrong in allowing General Baker's expedition to go to Suakin.

Sinkat had for long been in great straits. With the defeat of General Baker's force, the last hope of relief disappeared. On February 12, news reached Suakin that Tewfik Bey, despairing of all succour and finding his provisions exhausted, had made the desperate resolution to evacuate Sinkat and fight his way to Suakin. He made a brave fight for life and killed large numbers of the enemy, but eventually his whole force, with the exception of about thirty women and six men, was annihilated. Thus, another was added to the list of disasters in the Soudan.

The defeat of General Baker's force caused a panic at Suakin. Manifestly, the first thing to do was to provide for the safety of the town. Admiral Hewett landed a small force. He was placed in civil and military command. I was, at the same time, authorised to inform the Egyptian Government that "in the event of an attack on Suakin on the part of the rebels, the town would be defended by a British force."

In the meanwhile, British public opinion was greatly excited about Soudan affairs. Party politicians were sure not to allow so good an opportunity for attacking the Government to escape. Chauvinists and humanitarians alike swelled the ranks of the opposition. A meeting was called at the Mansion House to condemn the policy of the Government. No inconsiderable section of British public opinion was disposed to push the Government on to a policy of reconquering the Soudan without much regard either to the difficulties of the task, or to the ulterior consequences which would have ensued had such a course been adopted. Mr. Forster, who was a leading member of the Anti-Slavery Society and the chief of the party of bellicose philanthropy, attacked the Government. When, eventually, it was decided to send an expedition to Suakin, Mr. Forster said (February 14): "I rejoice that the Government have taken their present policy. By that, they are more likely to strike a blow against slavery than anything we have yet done." There was no mistaking this language. The Government were invited to undertake a military campaign against slavery.

Thus, there was a risk that the Government, which had been too fearful of assuming responsibility during the early stages of the Soudan troubles, would now, under the pressure of excited and ill-informed public opinion in England, be forced into the assumption of more serious responsibilities than they were aware of, or than it was desirable that they should assume. On February 12, I repeated to Lord Granville the following telegram which I had received from General Gordon, who was then on his way to Khartoum: "I sincerely hope that you will be reassured as to the situation, in spite of all that has happened." I added, "I entirely agree on all points with General Gordon, and trust that. in spite of the panic which appears to prevail in London, Her Majesty's Government will not change any of the main points of their policy." I followed this up by a further telegram on the same day in which I said: "I am altogether opposed to sending troops to Suakin except to hold the town." I held this opinion because I did not believe that British troops would arrive in time to save Tokar.

The pressure on the Government was, however, too strong to be resisted. It was decided to send a force to the relief of Tokar.

By February 28, about 4000 British soldiers, under the command of Major-General Sir Gerald

Graham, were collected at Trinkitat. A week before that date, however, a report arrived to the effect that the garrison of Tokar was about to capitulate.

The British Government were singularly unfortunate. From this time forth, the stock argument of their opponents was that their action was invariably "too late." This was the title given to a pamphlet published a year later on the Gordon mission; amongst party politicians, Lord Randolph Churchill, more especially, used his remarkable oratorical powers to place before the public the aspect of Soudan affairs represented by these words. The facts of the case had, however, to be faced. It was clear that the expedition would not be able to accomplish the only object with which it had been sent. What, therefore, was to be done? On February 24, Sir W. Hewett telegraphed to the Admiralty that the news of the fall of Tokar had been confirmed; but, he added, with all the conviction and impetuosity of a fighting sailor who was longing for action, "we must move on there with our men. Rebels are sure to stand; they are in considerable numbers mustering. Our forces landed. Decisive victory will re-establish order amongst the tribes round here." I remember Sir Frederick Stephenson, coming into my room on the morning of February 23 and saying to me, "Well! Tokar has fallen, but of course we must go on." He subsequently telegraphed to Lord Hartington, who was at that time Secretary of State for War: "News just received that rebels are in force on Baker Pasha's late battlefield, eager to fight and confident of victory. I strongly recommend that Graham should be ordered to advance towards Tokar, should this prove true."

It was clear that the soldiers and sailors were like greyhounds straining at the leash. They were almost within sight of their enemy, and at the last moment it appeared that they might not be allowed to attack. They were naturally disappointed, and I trust that the same spirit will always animate the British army and navy. My view, however, at the time was that the soldiers and sailors should not be allowed to decide the question. As Tokar had already fallen, I could not see what was the object of expending a number of valuable lives under the pretence of relieving the garrison. I, therefore, telegraphed to Lord Granville on the evening of February 23 in the following terms, "If the troops are not to advance on Tokar, the War Office should send out orders without a moment's delay. The soldiers are, of course, longing for a fight, and will advance if there is the smallest excuse for doing so. I can scarcely entertain a doubt that Tokar has fallen. In that case, I think a useless effusion of blood should be stopped; that enough troops should be left to garrison Suakin; and that the remainder should come back here. I would on no account send a British force to Kassala." At the same time, I repeated to Lord Granville a telegram which I had received from General Gordon, in answer to a message despatched by me telling him of the report that Tokar had fallen. "I think," he said, "if Tokar has fallen, Her Majesty's Government had better be quiet, as I see no advantage to be now gained by any action on their part. Let events work themselves out. The fall of Tokar will not affect in the least the state of affairs here (*i.e.* at Khartoum)."

It was, without doubt, difficult for the Government to act on the advice of General Gordon and myself. To have landed a force at Trinkitat, and then to have brought it away without achieving anything whatever, would have rendered the Government ridiculous, and would have exposed them to further attacks in Parliament. The lives of the officers and men who subsequently fell at the battle of El Teb, were, in reality, sacrificed to public clamour and the necessities of the Parliamentary situation. On February 15, Lord Granville wrote privately to me telling me that the papers on the subject were about to be presented to Parliament. "I have," he said, "cut out your opinion unfavourable to the expedition. You might as well try to stop a mule with a snaffle bridle as check the feeling here on the subject. Our great object must now be to get them (*i.e.* the troops) back as soon as possible." When, eventually, the Soudanese were beaten, the Government, which had been violently attacked from one quarter for inaction, were attacked from another quarter for their activity. On March 14, Lord Granville wrote to me: "We are very nearly stalemated in the Soudan by the bloody victories."

Sir Gerald Graham was consulted. On February 24, the following telegram was sent to him from the War Office: "Assuming Tokar to have fallen, what course would you recommend, remembering that no distant expedition will be sanctioned? Could the force march to Teb, protect fugitives, bury the English dead, and return by land to Suakin? If a movement on Suakin is threatened, you may take the offensive from Trinkitat or Suakin, as you think best. Report fully on the position." There could be no mistaking the spirit of this message. It meant that the Government wanted Sir Gerald Graham to suggest action of some sort, so that the policy of sending the expedition to Suakin might in some degree be justified. This, of course, tallied with the views of the soldiers. After receiving Sir Gerald

Graham's report, Lord Hartington sent him the following instructions: "You should, if practicable, before attacking, summon the chiefs to disband their forces and attend Gordon at Khartoum for the settlement of the Soudan. Say that we are not at war with the Arabs, but must disperse force threatening Suakin." This telegram was first communicated to me by Sir Frederick Stephenson. I felt convinced that the proposed summons to the tribal leaders to go to Khartoum would not be productive of any result. I, therefore, telegraphed privately to Lord Granville (February 27): "Stephenson has shown me the War Secretary's telegram to Graham. I do not think that you can stop Graham advancing now. It is too late."

On the morning of February 29, Sir Gerald Graham advanced with his entire available force. He found the Dervishes entrenched at El Teb; they were attacked and driven from their position with heavy loss. The British loss amounted to 189 of all ranks, killed and wounded.

On March 3, Sir Gerald Graham advanced to Tokar, which was reached without any further fighting. On the 4th, the whole force returned to Trinkitat, and on the 5th embarked for Suakin. Admiral Hewett telegraphed to the Admiralty: "Tokar expedition most successful." The success or failure of the expedition must be a matter of opinion. Its original object was to relieve the garrison of Tokar. This object had not been accomplished. It had been shown, not for the first time in history, that a small body of well-disciplined British troops could defeat a horde of courageous savages. But no other important object had been attained. Osman Digna had received a severe blow, but his power in the Soudan was by no means broken. Osman Digna's own view on the subject may be gathered from a letter written by him at the time and found some years afterwards at Tokar. "The English," he said, "did not stay long. God struck fear into their hearts, and they went back the next morning, staying only one night at the Mamurieh, and then they started back in their steamers."

The question now arose of whether any further operations should be undertaken by Sir Gerald Graham's force. On March 2, Admiral Hewett telegraphed to the Admiralty recommending that the troops should be assembled at Suakin, and that Osman Digna, who was still in the neighbourhood, should be attacked. "That," he said, "will quiet the whole of this country." On March 7, Lord Granville telegraphed to me: "Her Majesty's Government have approved the recommendation of Admiral Hewett and General Graham to land a force at Suakin to give effect to their Proclamation calling upon the rebel chiefs to come in and denouncing Osman Digna as an impostor. They will march on Osman's camp to disperse force if the Proclamation is ineffectual."

The Proclamation produced no effect, and, on March 13, General Graham's force advanced on Tamai, a few miles from Suakin, which was occupied by a Mahdist force estimated at 12,000 men. On the following morning, an engagement ensued. After an obstinate fight, 2000 Dervishes were killed; the remainder fled to the hills. In this action, the British loss was 13 officers and 208 men, killed and wounded.

On the following day (March 15), Osman Digna's camp was burned, and the British force returned to Suakin. On the 17th, Sir Gerald Graham telegraphed to the War Office: "The present position of affairs is that two heavy blows have been dealt at the rebels and followers of the Mahdi, who are profoundly discouraged. They say, however, that the English troops can do no more, and must re-embark and leave the country to them."

It will be as well to break off the narrative of events in the Eastern Soudan at this point. The subsequent operations depended upon the course of events in the valley of the Nile, to which it is now time to revert. It will be sufficient for the present to say that the whole of the episode narrated in this chapter is not one to which any Englishman can look back with either pride or pleasure. Many valuable lives were lost. A great slaughter of fanatical savages took place. But no political or military result was obtained at all commensurate with the amount of life and treasure which was expended.

# CHAPTER XXII

## THE GORDON MISSION

December 1883–January 1884

The situation in Egypt—Sir Frederick Stephenson—General Earle—Sir Edgar Vincent—Sir Evelyn Wood—Foreign Office support—First and second proposals to send General Gordon—They are rejected—Third proposal to send General Gordon—It is accepted—No British officer should have been sent to Khartoum—General Gordon should not in any case have been chosen—The responsibility of the British press—And of the British Government—General Gordon's optimism—My regret at having assented to the Gordon Mission.

During the course of an official career which extended over a period of nearly fifty years, I at times had some hard work. But I never had such hard work, neither was I ever in a position of such difficulty, or in one involving such a continuous strain on the mind, the nerves, and, I may add, the temper, as during the first three months of the year 1884. I was rarely able to leave my house. I had a very small staff to help me. I was generally hard at work from daybreak till late at night. Without doubt, mistakes were made during this period, but looking back to the difficulties of the situation and remembering the confusion which then reigned in Egyptian affairs, I cannot help reflecting that it was quite as much by luck as by good management that the mistakes were not more numerous and more serious. I had, fortunately, one qualification for dealing with the situation, and that was a strong constitution. Without that, I should certainly have broken down altogether.

Without entering into any detail, I will describe the broad features of the Egyptian situation, as it then existed.

The Egyptian question alone, by which I mean the work of reorganisation in Egypt proper, presented difficulties of no common order. On to this was now grafted the Soudan question, which by itself was one of the utmost importance, and which for the time being exercised a paramount, though indirect influence on the solution of all other Egyptian questions. The Government Treasury was well-nigh bankrupt. It seemed at the time as though a whole or partial repudiation of the Egyptian debt was imminent, and, if this had happened, very troublesome international complications would have ensued. The Europeans were discontented because trade was depressed, and because the indemnities due to them for their losses during and after the Alexandria bombardment had not yet been paid. The Pashas were in a morose and sullen condition because their privileges were threatened. The people were discontented because they had not as yet reaped the benefits which they had expected from the British occupation. The old arbitrary system of government by the courbash had been abolished, but nothing had as yet been instituted to take its place. The Arábist rebellion had profoundly shaken the authority of the ruling classes. The reorganisation of the army and of the police had only just been commenced. A large force of Gendarmerie had been withdrawn for service at Suakin, whence such of them as did not leave their bones to whiten on the sands of Trinkitat were to return discomfited and demoralised. The Anglo-Egyptian officials were for the most part new to their work. With some rare exceptions, the Egyptian officials were not only useless but often obstructive. A severe epidemic of cholera had but recently swept over the country, leaving behind it a variety of troublesome quarantine questions, the settlement of which involved considerable diplomatic difficulties. Every man's hand was against the British Government. French hostility was never more active. The other Powers of Europe, with the exception of Italy, were animated with no very friendly sentiments towards England. Prince Bismarck disliked the Liberal Government in England; moreover, he was at this time making an effort, which ended in failure, to conciliate France, a policy which naturally led Germany to adopt a hostile attitude towards England in Egypt. The Sultan again came forward with his favourite idea of deposing Tewfik Pasha and substituting Halim in his place, an idea which was, as on former occasions, at once nipped in the bud by the British Government. Nubar Pasha was unpopular in the country. The attitude which he assumed on matters connected with internal reform, increased the difficulties of the situation. His main object at this time was to get rid of Mr. Clifford Lloyd, who was endeavouring to reorganise the Department of the Interior. An international question of considerable importance had also to be dealt with during this period. The powers of the Mixed Courts had expired, and the conditions under which they were to be renewed had to be discussed. This subject afforded a wide field for petty international intrigue. In England, the Government were exposed to constant attacks from party politicians. The incidents of this party warfare necessitated frequent reference to Cairo for information, the collection of which often caused great trouble and waste of valuable time,[1] which I grudged all the more because I was aware that, when the information had been collected, it would be of little real utility and that, in fact, it was only demanded with a view to affording a handle to Parliamentary attack or defence. The Government themselves did not know their own mind. Every British official in Egypt turned to me for advice and guidance about the affairs of his Department, and in each Department numerous troublesome questions of detail were constantly cropping up for settlement. I was myself new to the work and had not had sufficient time to take stock of the situation, which was greatly changed since I left the country in 1880, or to fully understand the characters of the principal people with whom I had to deal. Looking at the situation as a whole, it seemed as if Isaiah's prophecy had been fulfilled. "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit." There were, however, some redeeming features in the situation.

In the first place, the presence of a British army in the country afforded a solid guarantee that, in spite of administrative disorder and foreign intrigue, nothing could occur of a nature calculated to endanger seriously the stability of the Khedive's rule. The behaviour and discipline of the British troops were alike excellent. Moreover, they were commanded by an officer (Sir Frederick Stephenson) who combined in a high degree all the qualities necessary to fill with advantage to his country a post of such exceptional difficulty as the command of an army of occupation in a foreign country. The French residents in Egypt resented the presence of a British army in their midst. They were in a state of nervous irritability, which rendered them prompt to take offence at the smallest real or imaginary provocation. At any moment, some paltry squabble might have occurred between the officers and soldiers of the army of occupation on the one hand, and the population on the other hand, which, if any Frenchman had been concerned, might have caused much trouble. The General Officer in command of the troops was thus called upon to exercise great tact, firmness, patience and judgment. These qualities Sir Frederick Stephenson possessed in a high degree; it was largely due to him that such difficulties as arose never assumed proportions which it was beyond the resources of local diplomacy to settle satisfactorily. Sir Frederick Stephenson won for himself the admiration even of those who were most hostile to the British occupation.

---

[1] On this subject, and, indeed, on all others, I received the utmost personal consideration from Lord Granville. On February 8, 1884, he wrote to me: "I keep over the references to you as much as possible, and I hope you fully understand that questions do not mean complaints."

General Earle occupied at Alexandria much the same position as that held by Sir Frederick Stephenson at Cairo. A first-rate soldier, a clear-headed and vigorous man of business, endowed with exceptional tact, good manners, and judgment, he was respected and liked by the whole population of Alexandria. A statue, now standing in the principal square of the town, was erected by public subscription to his memory, and bears witness to the honour in which he was universally held. The Dervish bullet, which subsequently cut short this promising career, deprived the Queen and the country of a servant of the highest merit.

Another bright spot on the otherwise dark horizon was that, in spite of occasional jars, reliance could always be placed on the loyalty and devotion of the British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government. Of the services of those officials, I shall have to speak more fully at a later period. For the present, I need only allude to the work performed by Sir Edgar Vincent and by Sir Evelyn Wood. The former was using all the resources of a mind endowed with singular fertility of resource to struggle with a financial situation which appeared well-nigh desperate. Sir Evelyn Wood was reconstructing the Egyptian army out of materials which appeared at the time to be very unpromising. Moreover, his advice on the military aspects of the Soudan question, on which the policy of the Government mainly depended, was of great value. He loyally supported me in enforcing a course of action, which, although obviously dictated by reason, was at the time extremely unpopular with almost all classes whether in England or in Egypt.

There was yet a third consideration from which I derived a certain amount of consolation during this stormy and difficult period. It has often been my fate to disagree with the Government which I was serving, but I have seen something of the relations between foreign Governments and their representatives abroad. So far as is possible for any one who has never sat in the House of Commons, I think I can appreciate the difficulties of Parliamentary life,—difficulties which, owing to a variety of circumstances, have increased in magnitude during the last few years. Looking to the whole of the facts, my experience leads me to the conclusion that British Ministers, whether Liberal or Conservative, are good masters to serve.

Of course, the exigencies of Parliamentary warfare are sometimes too much even for the most loyal of Ministers. They are occasionally obliged to trim their sails to a Parliamentary breeze; during the Soudan discussions, indeed, the breeze rose almost to the force of a hurricane; and, when this happens, the character and reputation of their representative abroad may suffer. But even then, it will probably only suffer for a time if he has a fairly good case to show. Not only British Ministers, but British public opinion are fair and just in the long run, although both the fairness and the justice are at times obscured in the midst of a sharp party conflict. I often disagreed with Lord Granville during his tenure of office; but I always felt that, if I got into any real difficulty, he would support me to the best of his ability.

On December 1, 1883, I received the following telegram from Lord Granville: "If General Charles Gordon were willing to go to Egypt, could he be of any use to you or to the Egyptian Government, and, if so, in what capacity?"[1] I did not at that time know General Gordon well, but I had seen a little of him, and I had, of course, heard much of him. My first impression was decidedly adverse to his employment in the Soudan. Moreover, when I spoke to Chérif Pasha on the subject, I found that he entertained strong objections to the proposal. I was unwilling to put forward my own objections, which were in some degree based on General Gordon's personal unfitness to undertake the work in hand. In replying to Lord Granville, therefore, I only dwelt on the objections entertained by the Egyptian Government, which were reasonable, and, I thought, calculated to produce an impression in London, without bringing in the awkward question of personal fitness. It was with these feelings uppermost in my mind that, on December 2, I telegraphed to

---

[1] Sir Henry Gordon (*Events, etc.*, p. 322) says that if General Gordon had gone to Khartoum six weeks earlier the result of his mission "would most likely have been a complete success." This conclusion is, of course, a mere conjecture and is incapable of proof. I see no reason to believe that the despatch of General Gordon to Khartoum early in December would have materially altered the course of events.

Lord Granville: "The Egyptian Government are very much averse to employing General Gordon, mainly on the ground that, the movement in the Soudan being religious, the appointment of a Christian in high command would probably alienate the tribes who remain faithful. I think it wise not to press them on the subject."[1]

The idea of sending General Gordon to the Soudan was then allowed to drop for a while, but his employment continued to be warmly advocated by the press in England, more especially by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a newspaper which took a leading part in the discussion of Egyptian affairs at that time.

On December 22, I sent to Lord Granville a telegram advising that the British Government should insist on the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops from the Soudan.[2] I indicated that Chérif Pasha would probably resign, and I added: "Also, it will be necessary to send an officer of high authority to Khartoum with full powers to withdraw the garrisons and to make the best arrangements he can for the future of the country."

On January 7, the Ministry of Chérif Pasha resigned, and a new Ministry was formed under the presidency of Nubar Pasha. On January 10, Lord Granville telegraphed to me: "Could General Charles Gordon or Sir Charles Wilson be of assistance under altered circumstances in Egypt?" I had had further time to think over this proposal since sending my telegram of December 22. The more I thought of it, the less was I inclined to send General Gordon, or, indeed, any Englishman to Khartoum. I discussed the matter with Nubar

---

[1] There was reason in the objection taken by the Egyptian Government. On March 4, 1884, General Gordon telegraphed from Khartoum: "My weakness is that of being foreign and Christian, and peaceful."

[2] *Vide ante*, p. 331.

Pasha, and we both came to the conclusion that the best plan would be to send Abdul-Kader Pasha. He had been a former Governor-General of the Soudan. He had been highly spoken of by Colonel Stewart. He had the reputation of being a courageous and capable soldier. It was under these circumstances that, on January 11, I telegraphed to Lord Granville: "I have consulted with Nubar Pasha, and I do not think that the services of General Gordon or Sir Charles Wilson can be utilised at present." I had thus twice rejected the proposal to send General Gordon to Khartoum. Would that I had done so a third time!

On January 14, Lord Granville telegraphed to me: "Can you give further information as to prospects of retreat for army and residents at Khartoum, and measures taken?" On the following day (January 15), Lord Granville telegraphed to me privately: "I hear indirectly that Gordon is ready to go straight to Suakin without passing through Cairo on the following rather vague terms. His mission to be to report to Her Majesty's Government on the military situation of the Soudan, and to return without any further engagement towards him. He would be under you for instructions and will send letters through you under flying seal. You and Nubar Pasha to give him all assistance and facilities as to telegraphing, etc. Egyptian Government to send Ibrahim Bey Fauzi to meet him at Suez, with a writer to attend on him. He might be of use in informing you and us of the situation. It would be popular at home, but there may be countervailing objections. Tell me your real opinion with or without Nubar Pasha."[1]

---

[1] Mr. Morley (*Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 149) says that, on January 14, Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone as follows: "If Gordon says he believes he could, by his personal influence, excite the tribes to

On January 16, I sent two telegrams to Lord Granville, one official, and the other private. The official telegram was as follows: "I hope soon to be able to telegraph fully, as the subject of the withdrawal from Khartoum is now being discussed. There can be no doubt, however, that very great difficulties will be encountered. It was intended to despatch Abdul-Kader, the new Minister of War, to Khartoum; he at first accepted, but now declines to go. The Egyptian Government would feel greatly obliged if Her Majesty's Government would select a well-qualified British officer to go to Khartoum instead of the War Minister. He would be given full powers, both civil and military, to conduct the retreat." At the same time, I sent the following private telegram: "My official telegram of to-day, and your private telegram of yesterday. Gordon would be the best man if he will pledge himself to carry out the policy of withdrawing from the Soudan as quickly as is possible consistently with saving life. He must also fully understand that he must take his instructions from the British representative in Egypt and report to him.[1] He was at Brussels early this month and is now believed to be in England. If so, please see him. I would rather have him than any one else, provided there is a perfectly clear understanding with him as to what his position is to be and what line of policy he is to carry out. Otherwise, not. Failing him, consider Stewart. Whoever goes

---

escort the Khartoum garrison and inhabitants to Suakin, a little pressure on Baring might be advisable." Mr. Gladstone replied by telegraph that he agreed. Hence, the telegram from Lord Granville to me given above.

I have been told on good authority that Mr. Gladstone was, in the first instance, much opposed to the despatch of General Gordon to Khartoum, and that he only yielded with great reluctance to the pressure which was brought to bear on him by some of his colleagues.

[1] The reason why I said this was that I knew something of General Gordon's erratic character, and I thought that the only chance of keeping him to his task was to appeal to his sense of discipline.

should be distinctly warned that he will undertake a service of great difficulty and danger."

On January 18, Lord Granville informed me by telegraph that General Gordon and Colonel Stewart would leave London that evening for Egypt. On the same day, Lord Granville wrote privately to me: "I was glad to get your approval of Gordon. He may possibly be of great use, and the appointment will be popular with many classes in this country. He praises you very highly and expressed a wish to be placed entirely under you."

General Gordon's own account of how he came to go to the Soudan is as follows: "At noon he, Wolseley, came to me and took me to the Ministers. He went in and talked to the Ministers, and came back and said: 'Her Majesty's Government want you to undertake this. Government are determined to evacuate the Soudan, for they will not guarantee future government. Will you go and do it?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Go in.' I went in and saw them. They said: 'Did Wolseley tell you your orders?' I said: 'Yes.' I said: 'You will not guarantee future government of the Soudan, and you wish me to go up and evacuate now.' They said: 'Yes,' and it was over, and I left at 8 P.M. for Calais."[1]

General Gordon's appointment, the *Pall Mall Gazette* said, with perfect truth, "was applauded enthusiastically by the press all over the country without distinction of party." I was reproached for having too "tardily discovered that Gordon was the best man," and the Government were sharply criticised for not having utilised his services at an earlier date.

Mr. Gladstone's Government made two great mistakes in dealing with Soudan affairs in their early stages. Of these one was a sin of omission, and the other a sin of commission. The sin of omission was that the Government did nothing to stop the departure of the Hicks expedition. The sin of commission was the despatch of General Gordon to Khartoum. Looking back at what occurred after a space of many years, two points are to my mind clear. The first is that no Englishman should have been sent to Khartoum. The second is that, if any one had to be sent, General Gordon was not the right man to send.

---

[1] *Letters to the Rev. J. Barnes*, 1885.

The reasons why no Englishman should have been sent are now sufficiently obvious. If he were beleaguered at Khartoum, which was possible and even probable, the British Government might be obliged to send an expedition to relieve him. The main object of British policy was to avoid being drawn into military operations in the Soudan. The employment of a British official at Khartoum involved a serious risk that it would be no longer possible to adhere to this policy, and the risk was materially increased when the individual chosen to go to the Soudan was one who had attracted to himself a greater degree of popular sympathy than almost any Englishman of modern times. General Gordon, Lord Cairns said (February 14) amidst the cheers of the House of Lords, "is one of our national treasures," and, although possibly party politicians used the popular sympathy with General Gordon as a card in the political game, Lord Cairns's expression faithfully represented the general tone of British public opinion at that time.

The Government scarcely realised the gravity of the decision at which they had arrived. I believe I am correct in stating that the question was not discussed at a Cabinet Council. Some years afterwards, Sir Charles Dilke, who was then a member of the Government, gave me the following extract from his Journal: "January 18, 1884. —Meeting at War Office. Ld. G., Hartington, Northbrook, and self. Decided to send Colonel Gordon to Suakin to report on the Soudan."[1]

I think I may say that I saw the danger more clearly than the Ministers in England, and it was on that account that I wished to send an Egyptian official to Khartoum, but I did not realise it so fully as I should have done.

If, however, it was a mistake to send any Englishman to Khartoum, it was a still greater mistake to choose General Gordon as the man to send.

It happens to most men engaged in public life that their conduct gives rise to some differences of opinion. General Gordon's actions were rarely subjected to this healthy form of criticism. A wave of Gordon *cultus* passed over England in 1884. His personal character, which was in many respects noble, the circumstances connected with his mission to the Soudan, the perilous position in which he was placed at Khartoum, his heroic defence of the town, and his tragic death, all appealed powerfully to the imagination of a people, who are often supposed to be pre-eminently cold and practical, but who in reality are perhaps more led by their emotions than any other nation in Europe.[1] During this stage of national excitement, any one who had attempted to judge General Gordon's conduct by the canons of criticism which are ordinarily applied to human action, would have failed to obtain a hearing. His melancholy death also silenced the voice of criticism. Five years after its occurrence, a critic, who was disposed to be hostile to General Gordon (Colonel Chaillé Long), wrote to Mr. Gladstone, with a view to eliciting an expression of his opinion on General Gordon's conduct. Mr. Gladstone, with the magnanimity of a true statesman and the delicate feelings of a gentleman, declined to enter into any discussion on the subject.[2]

---

[1] On January 18, Lord Northbrook wrote privately to me as follows: "I got a summons to-day to the W. O. to meet Chinese Gordon with Granville, Hartington, and Dilke. The upshot of the meeting was that he leaves by to-night's mail for Suakin to report on the best way of withdrawing the garrisons, settling the country, and to perform such other duties as may be entrusted to him by the Khedive's Government through you. He will be under you, and wishes it. He has no doubt of being able to get on with you. He was very hopeful as to the state of affairs, does not believe in the great powers of the Mahdi, does not think the tribes will go much beyond their own confines, and does not see why the garrisons should not get off. He did not seem at all anxious to retain the Soudan, and agreed heartily to accept the policy of withdrawal."

The following entry occurs in Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's *Notes from a Diary 1896-1901*, vol. ii. p. 75: "Northbrook said that, if he had previously read Gordon's book, nothing would have induced him to consent to his going anywhere. It was the book of a madman!"

The public enthusiasm which General Gordon's name evoked led to some disastrous consequences, yet I cannot bring myself to condemn it. It was, in fact, eminently creditable to the British public. There was nothing mean or self-seeking about it. It was a genuine and generous tribute to moral worth, and it showed that, even in this material age, moral worth has a hold on the public opinion of at least one great civilised country. It may be that the Gordon of real life did not always act quite up to the standard of the idealised hero who was present to the public mind, but, after all, this is merely to say that he was human and fallible. More than this, whatever may have been General Gordon's defects, the main lines of his character were really worthy of admiration. I do not speak so much of his high courage and fertility in military resource, though in these respects he was remarkable, but of his moral qualities. His religious convictions, though eccentric, were sincere. No one could doubt the remarkable purity of his private life, or his lofty disinterestedness as regards objects, such as money and rank, which usually excite the ambition of mankind. His aims in life were unquestionably high and noble.

---

[1] It was, I think, Lord Beaconsfield who said that the English were the most emotional people in Europe, and Lord Beaconsfield was a keen observer of human nature. Lord Salisbury once wrote to me: "It is easier to combat with the rinderpest or the cholera than with a popular sentiment."

[2] *Belford's Magazine*, September 1890, p. 549.

Besides his moral qualities, there was another point in General Gordon's character, which was eminently calculated to attract the sympathy of the British public. He was thoroughly unconventional. He chafed under discipline, and was never tired of pouring forth the vials of his wrath on the official classes.[1] Mistrust of Government officials is engrained in the English character, and I may add that I hope the dislike of being over-governed will ever continue to exist in England.

It is dangerous when either an individual or a nation allow their imagination to predominate over their reason, and this is what the British nation did under the spell of General Gordon's name. But it is perhaps better that the national imagination should even run riot at times in a good cause rather than that a dull level of practical utility should invariably be maintained, and that the imaginative qualities should be discarded altogether. Enthusiasts are troublesome to politicians and diplomatists, but the world would be dull without them. The enthusiastic and emotional classes found, or thought they had found their ideal type in General Gordon, and accordingly they bestowed on him extreme, sometimes extravagant eulogy.[1]

---

[1] General Gordon, who had a keen sense of humour, was fully aware of his own unfitness for official employment. "I own," he wrote in his Journal (p. 59), "to having been very insubordinate to Her Majesty's Government and its officials, but it is my nature, and I cannot help it. I fear I have not even tried to play battledore and shuttlecock with them. I know if *I* was chief I would never employ *myself*, for I am incorrigible. To men like Dilke, who weigh every word, I must be perfect poison."

General Gordon was no friend to the particular official class to which I belonged. "I must say," he wrote, "I hate our diplomatists. I think, with few exceptions, they are arrant humbugs; and I expect they know it." Acting on this general principle, General Gordon in his Journal which, when it was first published, was probably read by almost every educated man in England, held up Mr. (subsequently, Sir Edwin) Egerton,[2] myself. and others to odium and ridicule. To all this, acting on Mr. Gladstone's principle, I shall not attempt to reply, more especially as I feel sure that, had he lived, no one would have regretted what he wrote more than General Gordon himself. But I must, for the elucidation of this narrative, state why I think it was a mistake to send General Gordon to Khartoum.

---

[1] Unquestionably, officialism and enthusiasm—notably undisciplined enthusiasm—*ne se marient pas*, as the French would say. At the same time, strange as it may appear to some sections of the public, it is quite possible to have a genuine sympathy for suffering humanity without constantly mouthing the catchpenny phrases which form to so large an extent the stock-in-trade of the professional "friends of humanity." These latter are usually not over-charitable to those who cannot accept, and at once carry into execution, the whole of their idealist programmes. There appears to be much truth in Mr. John Morley's remark (*Robespierre*, p. 59), that "the most ostentatious faith in humanity in general seems always to beget the sharpest mistrust of all human beings in particular." I should term most of the leading British officials in Egypt humanitarians under any reasonable interpretation of that term, but the responsible nature of their position naturally obliges them to look at the questions with which they have to deal from many, and not merely from one point of view.

[2] Mr. Egerton acted as my *locum tenens* when I was temporarily absent from Cairo in 1884.

I saw General Gordon's Journal in manuscript before it was printed. I know that I am correct in saying that the Government would have preferred that the Journal should have been published without any omissions. At the instance. however, of General Gordon's friends and family, a good deal of violent and very foolish abuse of Lord Granville—and, if I remember rightly, of others—was omitted. It is, in my opinion, to be regretted that this was done. The publication of the Journal, as it was originally written, would have enabled the public to judge more accurately of the value of General Gordon's criticisms, than was possible when only an expurgated edition was issued.

"It is impossible," I wrote privately to Lord Granville on January 28, 1884, "not to be charmed by the simplicity and honesty of Gordon's character." "My only fear," I added, "is that he is terribly flighty and changes his opinions very rapidly. I am glad that Stewart, who impressed me favourably, is going with him, but I do not think Gordon much likes it himself. He said to me: 'They sent him (Stewart) with me to be my wet-nurse.'"[1] Impulsive flightiness was, in fact, the main defect of General Gordon's character, and it was one which, in my opinion, rendered him unfit to carry out a work which pre-eminently required a cool and steady head. I used to receive some twenty or thirty telegrams from General Gordon in the course of the day when he was at Khartoum, those in the evening often giving opinions which it was impossible to reconcile with others despatched the same morning. Scarcely, indeed, had General Gordon started on his mission, when Lord Granville, who does not appear at first to have understood General Gordon's character, began to be alarmed at his impulsiveness. On February 8, Lord Granville wrote to me: "I own your letters about Gordon rather alarm. His changes about Zobeir are difficult to understand.[2] Northbrook consoles me by saying that he says all the foolish things that pass through his head, but that his judgment is excellent." I am not prepared to go so far as to say that General Gordon's judgment was excellent. Nevertheless, there was some truth in Lord Northbrook's remark. I often found that, amidst a mass of irrelevant verbiage and amidst many contradictory opinions, a vein of sound common sense and political instinct ran through General Gordon's proposals. So much was I impressed with this, and so fearful was I that the sound portions of his proposals would be rejected in London on account of the eccentric language in which they were often couched, that, on February 12, I telegraphed to Lord Granville: "In considering Gordon's suggestions, please remember that his general views are excellent, but that undue importance must not be attached to his words. We must look to the spirit rather than the letter of what he says."

---

[1] Whilst on his way to Khartoum, Colonel Stewart wrote me a letter, from which it was clear that, at one time, the relations between him and General Gordon were much strained. He asked me to tear it up directly I had read it, without showing it to any one. This I accordingly did. Subsequently, they appear to have been fully reconciled, but it was only natural that there should have been occasional jars between two men of such very different characters and habits of thought.

[2] This is an allusion to circumstances which took place at Cairo, and which will be presently narrated.

In spite of General Gordon's high qualities, however, I do not think that a man of his peculiar character was a proper person to send on such an extremely difficult mission as that of arranging for the evacuation of the Soudan. The task was, indeed, so difficult that it is probable that no one could have carried it out successfully, but I believe that a better chance of success would have presented itself if Colonel Stewart had been sent without General Gordon. It is singular how entirely General Gordon's reputation has overshadowed that of Colonel Stewart. I have rarely come across anybody who impressed me more favourably than this cool, sagacious, and courageous soldier. His premature death was a great loss both to England and to Egypt.

One further point remains to be considered. Who was responsible for sending General Gordon?

In a sense, the main responsibility rests with the press of England, and, notably, with the *Pall Mall Gazette.* The people of England, as represented by the press, insisted on sending General Gordon to the Soudan, and accordingly to the Soudan he was sent. "Anonymous authorship," one of the wisest political thinkers of modern times has stated, "places the public under the direction of guides who have no sense of personal responsibility."[1] The arguments in favour of newspaper influence are too commonplace to require mention. But newspaper government has certain disadvantages, and these disadvantages were never more clearly shown than in the incident now under discussion.

The attitude of the British press, however, though it may be pleaded in palliation of the mistake which was made, does not, of course, exonerate the Government from responsibility. The truth is, that Mr. Gladstone's Government did not fully realise the importance of the step they were taking. Whilst entirely agreeing in the policy of evacuating the Soudan, I had pressed upon the Government the extreme difficulty of carrying the policy into execution. I had told Lord Granville that any one who went to the Soudan would "undertake a service of great difficulty and danger." But these warnings fell unheeded, neither can it be any matter for surprise that they should have done so, for the one person who the Government were told on all sides was the highest authority on Soudan affairs, namely, General Gordon himself, did not share my apprehensions in any degree; neither was any danger-signal hoisted by Colonel Stewart. There can be no doubt that when General Gordon was in London, his views were far too optimistic. He did not rightly appreciate either the state of affairs which then existed in the Soudan, or the difficulties of the task which he had undertaken. Being deceived himself, it was natural that he should, quite unintentionally, have deceived the Government, and should have encouraged them in the optimism to which all Governments are somewhat prone.[1] On January 28, after having seen General Gordon, I wrote to Lord Granville: "Gordon speaks very hopefully of being able to do the whole thing in three or four months." So late as February 20, that is to say, two days after his arrival at Khartoum, General Gordon wrote to Colonel Coetlogon: "I have proposed to you to go back to Cairo because, in my belief, there is not the least chance of any danger being now incurred in Khartoum, which I consider as safe as Cairo. . . . You may rest assured that you leave a place which is as safe as Kensington Park."

---

[1] Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, *On the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion*, p. 355.

To sum up,—the main defence of the Government, for what it is worth, is contained in the saying of the French revolutionary leader when he was reproached for obeying the dictates of the Jacobin mob: "Je suis leur chef; il faut que je les suive." The Government did not attempt to guide public opinion. They followed it. Nevertheless, the opinions which General Gordon entertained, may be pleaded as some justification for the line of policy adopted by the Government. If the British Ministers erred on the side of optimism, it is certain that their optimistic views were shared by General Gordon, and, indeed, were largely based on what he said both before leaving London and whilst on his way to Khartoum.

So far as my personal responsibility is concerned, I can plead no such justification, or, at all events, I can only plead it to a less degree. I was never under any delusion as to the difficulties of the task which General Gordon had undertaken, or as to the personal danger which he and Colonel Stewart would run. More than this, I mistrusted General Gordon's judgment, and I was in reality adverse to his employment. I am not now making use of *ex post facto* arguments. I have such a vivid recollection of my own frame of mind at that time, that I can state very positively why it was that, after having twice refused to utilise General Gordon's services, I yielded on being pressed a third time by Lord Granville. I believed that at that time I stood alone in hesitating to employ General Gordon. Public opinion in England was calling loudly for his employment. Lord Granville's telegrams, though couched in language from which it might be inferred that the Government would defer to my opinion, showed, nevertheless, clearly enough a strong wish on the part of the Government that General Gordon should be employed. Nubar Pasha concurred in this view. I did not, however, attach much importance to his opinion on the special point at issue. Sir Evelyn Wood's opinion carried more weight with me. He was favourable to the employment of General Gordon. So also was Colonel Watson, who was at that time on the staff of the Egyptian army, and who spoke with the authority of one who knew General Gordon well, having served under him in the Soudan.

---

[1] On September 28, 1884, General Gordon wrote in his Journal (p. 110): "The Government may say that they had reasonable hopes that I would succeed; I will neither say I gave them such assurance or that I did not give it. I think I was neutral in giving or in not giving such an assurance." When General Gordon wrote this, he must have forgotten many of his previous utterances.

With this array of opinion against me, I mistrusted my own judgment. I did not yield because I hesitated to stand up against the storm of public opinion. I gave a reluctant assent, in reality against my own judgment and inclination, because I thought that, as everybody differed from me, I must be wrong. I also thought that I might be unconsciously prejudiced against General Gordon from the fact that his habits of thought and modes of action in dealing with public affairs differed widely from mine.

In yielding, I made a mistake which I shall never cease to regret. It may well be that, had I not yielded, the result would have been the same. The public feeling in favour of sending General Gordon was so strong as to be almost irresistible. But this consideration does not constitute any consolation to me. By yielding, I rendered myself in some degree responsible for all the valuable lives which were lost, and the treasure which was subsequently expended in the Soudan.

The whole incident left a strong impression on my mind. Unquestionably, much harm has been done at times by Governments failing to yield, or yielding too late, to a clear and unmistakable expression of public opinion. Nothing, in fact, can be more foolish or hurtful than that officials should unreasonably oppose a stiff barrier of bureaucratic obstruction to the views of the outside public. If they do so, they are liable to be swept away. But occasions do occur, which in these democratic days are becoming more rather than less frequent, when the best service a Government official can render to his country is to place himself in opposition to the public view. Indeed, if he feels certain that he is right, it is his bounden duty to do so, especially in respect to questions as to which public opinion in England is ill-informed. Such an occasion presented itself when there was a question of sending General Gordon to the Soudan. It was worth while to incur a good deal of unpopularity and misrepresentation in order to save the Government and the nation from making so great a mistake. "A man," it has been truly said, "who never disagrees with his countrymen, and who shrinks from unpopularity as the worst of all evils, can never have a share in moulding the traditions of a virile race, though for a time he may make its fashions."[1] I repeat, therefore, that I shall never cease to regret that I did not stand to my guns and maintain, to the best of my ability, my original objections to the Gordon mission. Had I known General Gordon better, I should certainly never have agreed to his employment.

---

[1] Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton,* p. 436.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## GORDON AT CAIRO

### JANUARY 24–26, 1884

General Gordon wishes to go to Suakin—He goes to Cairo—Consequences which resulted from the change of route—General Gordon's views as to the Soudan—His London instructions—Instructions issued at Cairo—General Gordon appointed Governor-General of the Soudan—And furnished with certain Proclamations—Reasons why General Gordon's instructions were changed—The Darfour Sultan—General Gordon proposes that Zobeir Pasha should accompany him—Interview between General Gordon and Zobeir Pasha—It is decided not to employ Zobeir Pasha—General Gordon leaves Cairo.

WHEN, on January 18, Lord Granville informed me that General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were about to proceed to Egypt, he added that General Gordon was anxious not to go to Cairo, and that he would go through the Suez Canal straight to Suakin. I was requested to meet him at Ismailia. The reason why General Gordon did not wish to visit Cairo was obvious. He had publicly criticised the conduct of the Khedive in no measured terms, and did not wish to meet him.

The road from Suakin to Berber was at this time blocked. The tribes were in a state of open rebellion, and had gained a series of successes over the Egyptian troops. It was certain that General Gordon would never be able to reach Khartoum by the Suakin route. I, therefore, telegraphed to Lord Granville, on January 19, urging the desirability of General Gordon's coming to Cairo. Lord Granville supported my view. The result was that General Gordon came to Cairo. He arrived on the evening of January 24.

If I had not interfered as regards General Gordon's route, a point which seemed at the time to be one of detail, the course of history in the Soudan would have been changed and many valuable lives, including probably that of General Gordon himself, would have been saved. General Gordon would possibly never have got to Khartoum, and it would not, therefore, have been necessary to send any British expedition to the Soudan. It is probable, indeed almost certain, that in a few weeks he would have returned to England without having effected anything of importance towards the accomplishment of his mission. I remember that it crossed my mind that I had better not interfere, but leave General Gordon to work out his plans in his own way. It was, however, clear that, in going to Suakin, General Gordon would foredoom his mission to failure, and that he would never have made any such proposal had he been well acquainted with the state of affairs then existing in the Eastern Soudan. I had, therefore, excellent reasons for interfering, but, looking back upon events as they subsequently occurred, I regret that I did so.

On the morning of January 25, General Gordon accompanied me to the Ismailia Palace to see the Khedive. Colonel Stewart wrote in his journal: "Gordon apologised to Tewfik for his former brusque behaviour, and the interview went off very well"

The question of General Gordon's instructions then had to be discussed. I shall have to deal with this matter at some length, as it has formed the subject of much misapprehension.[1]

---

[1] For instance, Sir William Butler (*Charles George Gordon*, p. 200) says: "Few persons are aware that the English Government knew

On January 23, whilst on his way to Egypt, General Gordon wrote a Memorandum setting forth the line of policy which he proposed to pursue in the Soudan. It contained the following passage:

"My idea is that the restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans, who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquests, and whose families still exist; that the Mahdi should be left altogether out of the calculations as regards the handing over of the country, and that it should be optional with the Sultans to accept his supremacy or not. As these Sultans would probably not be likely to gain by accepting the Mahdi as their sovereign, it is probable that they will hold to their independent positions. . . . The most difficult question is how, and to whom, to hand over the arsenals of Khartoum, Dongola, and Kassala, which towns have, so to say, no old-standing families, Khartoum and Kassala having sprung up since Mehemet Ali's conquest. Probably it would be advisable to postpone any decision as to these towns till such time as the inhabitants have made known their opinion."

Colonel Stewart in recording his "cordial agreement" with General Gordon's views, added: "Handing back the territories to the families of the dispossessed Sultans is an act of justice both towards them and their people. The latter, at any rate, will no longer be at the mercy of foreign mercenaries, and if they are tyrannised over, it will be more or less their own fault. Handing back the districts to the old families is also a politic act, as raising up a rival power to that of the Mahdi. As it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to

---

nothing of the appointment of their officer as Governor-General of the Soudan, or of the change of his destination from Suakin to the Nile route, until some days after both had been effected by our Minister in Cairo." Both of these statement are devoid of foundation.

foresee all the eventualities that may arise during the evacuation, it seems to me as the more judicious course to rely on the discretion of General Gordon and his knowledge of the country."

The policy of setting up the local Sultans to govern the country appeared at the time wise and politic; but, looking at events with an after-knowledge of what subsequently happened, it is evident that General Gordon both underrated the power of the Mahdi, and overrated the influence of the local Sultans. The most powerful and warlike tribes in the Soudan were partisans of the Mahdi. The families of the local Sultans, who had governed the Soudan in former times, had lost all hold on the public opinion of the country.

Moreover, General Gordon himself indicated one great difficulty in the way of giving effect to this policy. It was that, in respect to Khartoum, Dongola, and Kassala, there were "no old-standing families." Now, whoever holds Khartoum, dominates a large part of the Soudan; unless, therefore, the policy in question could be carried into execution as regards Khartoum, it was almost sure to fall to the ground altogether.

When General Gordon arrived in Egypt, I received a copy of the instructions, dated January 18, which were given to him in London by Lord Granville. The principal portion of these instructions was as follows:—

"Her Majesty's Government are desirous that you should proceed at once to Egypt to report to them on the military situation in the Soudan, and on the measures which it may be advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding positions in that country, and for the safety of the European population in Khartoum.

"You are also desired to consider and report upon the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Soudan, and upon the manner in which the safety and the good administration by the Egyptian Government of the parts on the sea-coast can best be secured. . . .

"You will consider yourself authorised and instructed to perform such other duties as the Egyptian Government may desire to intrust to you and as may be communicated to you by Sir E. Baring."

On the morning of January 25, a meeting took place to consider whether, acting on the authority I had received from Lord Granville, I should issue further instructions to General Gordon. At this meeting were present Nubar Pasha, General Gordon, Colonel Stewart, Sir Evelyn Wood, and myself. After a long discussion, the meeting was adjourned till the following afternoon. It was arranged that, in the interval, I was to embody in a letter addressed to General Gordon the conclusions at which we had arrived.

On the occasion of the second meeting, I went through the draft instructions which I had prepared, and discussed them with General Gordon and the others who were present. A few changes were made. The following extracts will be sufficient to show the leading features of these instructions:—

"It is believed that the number of the Europeans at Khartoum is very small, but it has been estimated by the local authorities that some 10,000 to 15,000 people will wish to move northwards from Khartoum only when the Egyptian garrison is withdrawn. These people are native Christians, Egyptian employés, their wives and children, etc. The Government of His Highness the Khedive are earnestly solicitous that no effort should be spared to ensure the retreat both of these people and of the Egyptian garrison without loss of life. As regards the most opportune time and the best method for effecting the retreat, whether of the garrisons or of the civil populations, it is neither necessary nor desirable that you should receive detailed instructions. . . .

"You will bear in mind that the main end to be pursued is the evacuation of the Soudan. This policy was adopted, after very full discussion, by the Egyptian Government, on the advice of Her Majesty's Government. It meets with the full approval of His Highness the Khedive, and of the present Egyptian Ministry. I understand, also, that you entirely concur in the desirability of adopting this policy, and that you think it should on no account be changed.[1] You consider that it may take a few months to carry it out with safety. You are further of opinion that 'the restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist; and that an endeavour should be made to form a confederation of those Sultans.' In this view, the Egyptian Government entirely concur. It will, of course, be fully understood that the Egyptian troops are not to be kept in the Soudan merely with a view to consolidating the power of the new rulers of the country. But the Egyptian Government have the fullest confidence in your judgment, your knowledge of the country, and your comprehension of the general line of policy to be pursued. You are, therefore, given full discretionary power to retain the troops for such reasonable period as you may think necessary, in order that the abandonment of the country may be accomplished with the least possible risk to life and property.

"A credit of £100,000 has been opened for you at the Finance Department, and further funds will be supplied to you on your requisition when this sum is exhausted."

---

[1] The last part of this sentence was added at Gordon's own request (*vide ante*, p. 390).

Simultaneously with the issue of these instructions, a letter was addressed by the Khedive to General Gordon appointing him Governor-General of the Soudan. General Gordon was, at the same time, furnished with two Proclamations from the Khedive addressed to the inhabitants of the Soudan. In one of these, the appointment of General Gordon to be Governor-General was notified, and the people were invited to obey his orders. In the other Proclamation, more distinct allusion was made to the intention of the Government to evacuate the Soudan. "We have decided," it was said, "to restore to the families of the kings of the Soudan their former independence."

"General Gordon," I wrote to Lord Granville on February 1, "has authority and discretion to issue one or other of these Proclamations whenever he may think it desirable to do so. He fully understands that he is going to Khartoum for the purpose of carrying out the policy of evacuation, and has expressed to me his fullest concurrence in the wisdom of this policy. Your Lordship will have seen, by my instructions to him, that no doubt is left on this point, and these instructions were drafted at the request and with the entire approval of General Gordon himself. It was, however, thought desirable, after full discussion here, that the widest discretionary powers should be given to General Gordon as regards the manner of carrying out the policy, and as to the best time and mode of announcing it at Khartoum."

It has been frequently stated, first, that the instructions which General Gordon received at Cairo differed so widely from those which were given to him in London as to alter entirely the character of his mission; and, secondly, that the change in his instructions was effected by myself without any reference to London. These statements were freely made by the press. They were echoed by Mr. Egmont Hake, Sir William Butler, and others who have written on the Gordon Mission. The British Government, also, wrote to me a despatch in which, though they approved of the instructions given to General Gordon, they confirmed the erroneous popular impression that the London instructions had been materially altered by me, acting on my own authority, without reference to the Foreign Office. "Her Majesty's Government," it was said, "bearing in mind the exigencies of the occasion, concurred in these instructions, which virtually altered General Gordon's mission from one of advice to that of executing, or at least directing, the evacuation not only of Khartoum, but of the whole Soudan, and they were willing that General Gordon should receive the very extended powers conferred upon him by the Khedive to enable him to effect this very difficult task."

The statement that the instructions, which General Gordon received in Cairo, altered the character of his mission is substantially correct. The statement that I altered General Gordon's instructions without authority from the British Government is wholly devoid of foundation.

I never cared to go into this subject at the time, because my hands were full of other work, and, moreover, by the time the discussions to which I allude took place, the question merely had an historic interest. But I may now state what occurred.

In the first place, I have to observe that the importance of this question has been exaggerated. In reality, it mattered little what instructions

General Gordon received, because he was not the sort of man to be bound by any instructions.[1]

In the second place, the instructions, which General Gordon received in London, were manifestly written without a due appreciation of the necessities of the situation. The Egyptian Government had asked for "a well-qualified British officer to go to Khartoum with full powers, both civil and military, to conduct the retreat." It would have been a mere mockery if, instead of an executive officer, they had been given some one whose sole duty it would have been to write a report. There had already been a sufficient number of reports about the Soudan. The moment had arrived when it was necessary to cease writing and to act. It would have been particularly ridiculous to send General Gordon, of all men in the world, as a "mere reporter upon a difficult situation."[2] General Gordon was essentially a man of action. No one, who knew anything of his character, could have supposed for one moment that he would confine himself to mere reporting.

The idea, however, appears to have originated with General Gordon himself. On January 15, Lord Granville telegraphed to me that General Gordon was prepared to go to the Soudan on certain "rather vague terms," the principal of which was that he was to "report to Her Majesty's Government on the military situation of the Soudan." Moreover, on February 14, Sir Charles Dilke stated in the House of Commons: "General Gordon drafted his own instructions. . . . Believing him to be the highest authority, that he knew more of the conditions, and that he was better able to form a judgment on the subject than anybody else, we asked him to draft his own instructions." In spite of this fact, however, nothing can be more certain than that General Gordon never considered his mission to be that of a simple reporter. Indeed, on the day (January 18) on which General Gordon received his London instructions, Lord Granville telegraphed to me: "Gordon suggests that it may be announced in Egypt that he is on his way to Khartoum to arrange for the future settlement of the Soudan for the best advantage of the people." Nothing was said of reporting. If General Gordon was to arrange for "the future settlement of the Soudan," I fail to see how he could do so without exercising some executive authority.

---

[1] On January 21, 1884, I wrote to Lord Granville: "It is as well that Gordon should be under my orders, but a man who habitually consults the Prophet Isaiah when he is in a difficulty is not apt to obey the orders of any one."

[2] *Too Late*, p. 4.

In the third place, it is to be observed that the proposal that General Gordon should be made Governor-General of the Soudan did not emanate from any one in Cairo. It was made by General Gordon himself, whilst he was on the journey from London to Egypt, and was communicated to me by Lord Granville who, on January 22, telegraphed to me certain "suggestions made by Gordon as to the steps which should be taken with regard to the present state of affairs in the Soudan."[1] The first of these suggestions was that the Khedive should issue a Proclamation to the people of the Soudan, in the following terms: "To the people of the Soudan! The immense distances which have separated me from you have given rise to disorders which have resulted in revolt against my authority. This revolt has cost much blood and treasure, far beyond any adequate compensation, and has thrown burdens on Lower Egypt which are intolerable. I have, therefore, determined to restore to the various Sultans of the Soudan their independence, and for this purpose I have commissioned General Gordon, late Governor-General of the Soudan, to proceed there as my representative, and to arrange with you for the evacuation of the country and the withdrawal of my troops. Her Majesty's Government, being most desirous of your welfare, have also appointed General Gordon as their Commissioner for the same purpose. *General Gordon is hereby appointed Governor-General for the time necessary to accomplish the evacuation.*"[1]

---

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 2 of 1884, p. 4. A short despatch from Lord Granville to me is published in this Parliamentary paper. From this despatch it appears that certain suggestions of General Gordon's were telegraphed to me, and that I was authorised to carry them out. But the suggestions themselves were not published. If they had been published, no misapprehension on the point now under discussion would have been possible.

The second suggestion was that a Proclamation should be issued in General Gordon's name, announcing that he had "*accepted the post of Governor-General of the Soudan.*"[1] "I recommend," General Gordon said in his telegram to Lord Granville, which was repeated to me, "that these Decrees and Proclamations should be published as soon as possible in the Soudan." In forwarding General Gordon's recommendations to me, Lord Granville added: "Her Majesty's Government have not sufficient local knowledge to enable them to form an opinion as to the practicability of these suggestions, and I therefore authorise you, as time is valuable, either immediately to make the arrangements suggested, or to await General Gordon's arrival, and consult with him as to the action to be taken." As, when I received this telegram, General Gordon had already left Brindisi, I did not think it desirable to act upon the authority given to me to cause these Proclamations to be issued at once. I decided to await General Gordon's arrival. When he arrived, I moved the Khedive to name him Governor-General of the Soudan. This was in accordance with General

---

[1] The italics are not in the original.

Gordon's own suggestion, upon which I had been authorised by Lord Granville to act. Further, as I have already mentioned,[1] certain Proclamations were prepared and given to General Gordon with discretionary power to use them should he think fit to do so. These Proclamations did not differ materially from those which had been communicated to me in Lord Granville's telegram of January 22.

Under these circumstances, it was with some surprise that, on February 4, I received a telegram from Lord Granville asking me whether "General Gordon had accepted any appointment from the Khedive." And it was with still greater surprise that I found myself accused, not only by the public, but also to a certain extent by the Government, of having altered the character of General Gordon's mission without any authority to do so. The documents quoted above are sufficient to show that this accusation was altogether groundless. Indeed, so little importance did I attach to the changes in the instructions, which had been made at Cairo, that on January 28, I wrote privately to Lord Granville: "You will see that I gave Gordon, at his own request, additional instructions, of which I hope you will approve. They really amount to nothing more than what he had already received, but they give him a little latitude as to the time at which the troops shall be withdrawn." Looking to the fact that, on the face of the thing, it was absurd to send General Gordon as a mere reporter, to the further fact that General Gordon, who had just arrived from London, never said one word to me to induce the belief that such was the intention of the Government, and also to the fact that Lord Granville had himself authorised me to secure General Gordon's nomination as Governor-General of the Soudan, it never occurred to me that I was departing from the wishes and instructions of the British Government by one hair's-breadth. The explanation of all this confusion is, however, very simple. I believe that the original intention of the British Government was that General Gordon should limit himself to reporting, and that Lord Granville did not see that, in authorising General Gordon to accept the appointment of Governor-General of the Soudan, he changed the spirit of the instructions which he had issued on January 18. He was, therefore, surprised to find out what he had done.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 446.

Leaving aside, however, the personal and, therefore, unimportant question of who is responsible for naming General Gordon Governor-General of the Soudan, I wish to say that, in my opinion, the decision was a wise one. General Gordon was about to depart on a very difficult and dangerous mission. He had resided for some while in the Soudan, and was supposed to be well acquainted with the affairs of that country. The only chance of success lay in following his advice, and adopting such measures as he thought most likely to conduce to the accomplishment of his task. He wished to be named Governor-General, and he was obviously right. Otherwise, he would have exercised no authority.

To resume the narrative. It has been already mentioned that one of the main difficulties, which stood in the way of re-establishing the rule of the local Sultans in the Soudan, was that in some of the most important portions of the country there were no old-standing families. This difficulty did not, however, exist in respect to Darfour. Only ten years had elapsed since that province had been annexed by Egypt. Before that period, the country had been governed by a line of Sultans which had existed for more than four hundred years. When the annexation took place, the surviving members of the reigning family were deported to Cairo. The Egyptian Government doled out allowances to them. In respect to Darfour, therefore, there seemed to be some prospect of carrying into execution the policy advocated by General Gordon.

There were several members of the Darfour family at Cairo. It was no easy matter to decide which to choose. The position of a *Roi en exil* is not under any circumstances calculated to ennoble the character. When the ex-monarch happens to be an ignorant barbarian leading a slothful life in a semi-civilised Oriental capital, such as Cairo, and dependent on the charity of the Government for his subsistence, no element is wanting to hasten the process of moral decadence. The uses of adversity had not been turned to account by the Darfour family. The materials from which a choice had to be made were, therefore, unpromising. However, a choice was made. The individual chosen was Emir Abdul-Shakour, son of the late Sultan Abdul-Rahman. He is described in Colonel Stewart's Journal as a "common-looking, unintelligent, and badly-dressed native." He was given "£E.2000, a well-embroidered coat, and the biggest decoration that could be found." He at first wished to remain in Cairo for several days in order to make preparations for his departure, but General Gordon was in a hurry to be off, and the Darfour Sultan was with some difficulty induced to start with him. Colonel Stewart, speaking of General Gordon's departure from Cairo on the night of January 26, wrote in his Journal: "Some delay was caused at starting by the numerous retinue of the Darfour Sultan. Extra carriages had to be put on for the accommodation of his twenty-three wives and a quantity of baggage. At the last moment, his gala uniform was almost forgotten, and there was some commotion until it was found."

Altogether, it did not look much as if an "unintelligent native" with twenty-three wives and a quantity of baggage, who was, as it subsequently appeared, inordinately proud of his decoration and of his "gala uniform," would be very helpful in inaugurating the new policy.

One further incident of importance occurred whilst General Gordon was in Cairo.

In the course of this narrative allusion has already been made to Zobeir Pasha.[1] It is needless to dwell at length on the history of his previous relations with General Gordon. It will be sufficient to say that Zobeir Pasha's social position,[2] the wealth which he had amassed in slave-hunting, his courage, ability, and force of character, had at one time won for him a position of commanding influence in the Soudan. In June 1878, Zobeir Pasha's son, Suleiman, raised a revolt in the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, and killed 200 of the Egyptian regular troops. General Gordon's lieutenant, Gessi, was sent against him, and, in the beginning of 1879, the rebellion was crushed. Suleiman was taken prisoner and shot. A letter from Zobeir Pasha was found in Suleiman's possession, in which the father incited the son to revolt. Zobeir Pasha's property was confiscated. In 1884, he was residing at Cairo. He was detained there, but was allowed his personal liberty and received an allowance from the Egyptian Government. Under these circumstances, it was natural that there should be enmity between General Gordon and Zobeir Pasha.

On January 22, whilst General Gordon was on his way to Egypt, I received the following telegram from Lord Granville: "Gordon considers it most important that Zobeir should be well watched by a European to prevent his sending emissaries or letters to the Soudan. He has suggested that Zobeir should be sent to Cyprus, but there is no legal power to detain him if sent." On receiving this telegram, I took steps to have Zobeir Pasha watched.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, pp. 402-404.

[2] Zobeir Pasha is a descendant of the Abbaside dynasty of Khalifs.

On January 25, whilst paying a visit to Chérif Pasha, General Gordon accidentally met Zobeir Pasha. A short conversation ensued between the two, with the result that General Gordon expressed a wish that he and Zobeir Pasha should meet in my presence with a view to the latter stating his complaints.

On the morning of the 26th, I received a written Memorandum from General Gordon, in which, after sketching the history of the events which led to Zobeir Pasha's expulsion from the Soudan, he went on to express himself as follows:—

"Zobeir, without doubt, was the greatest slave-hunter who ever existed. Zobeir is the most able man in the Soudan, he is a capital general, and has been wounded several times. Zobeir has a capacity of government far beyond any other man in the Soudan. All the followers of the Mahdi would, I believe, leave the Mahdi on Zobeir's approach, for the Mahdi's chiefs are ex-chiefs of Zobeir. Personally, I have a great admiration for Zobeir, for he is a man, and is infinitely superior to those poor fellows who have been Governors of the Soudan. But I question in my mind, 'Will Zobeir ever forgive me the death of his son?' and that question has regulated my action respecting him, for I have been told he bears me the greatest malice, and one cannot wonder at it, if one is a father. I would even now risk taking Zobeir, and would willingly bear the responsibility of doing so, convinced as I am that Zobeir's approach ends the Mahdi, which is a question which has its pulse in Syria, the Hedjaz, and Palestine.

"It cannot be the wish of Her Majesty's Government, or of the Egyptian Government, to have an intestine war in the Soudan on its evacuation, yet such is sure to ensue, and the only way which would prevent it is the restoration of Zobeir, who would be accepted on all sides, and who would end the Mahdi in a couple of months. My duty is to obey the orders of Her Majesty's Government, *i.e.* to evacuate the Soudan as soon as possible *vis-à-vis* the safety of the Egyptian employés. To do this, I want no Zobeir. But if the addenda is made that I leave a satisfactory settlement of affairs, then Zobeir becomes a *sine qua non.* Therefore, the question resolves itself into this, does Her Majesty's Government, or Egyptian Government, desire a settled state of affairs in the Soudan after the evacuation? Do those Governments want to be free of this troublesome fanatic? If they do, then Zobeir should be sent; if the two Governments are indifferent, then do not send him, and I have confidence we will get out the Egyptian employés in three or four months, and will leave a cockpit behind us. It is not my duty to dictate what should be done. I will only say—

"1. I was justified in my action against Zobeir.

"2. That if Zobeir bears no malice personally against me, I would take him at once, as a humanly certain settler of the Mahdi and of those in revolt.

"I have written this Memorandum, and Zobeir's story may be heard. I only ask that after he has been interrogated, I may be questioned on such subjects as his statements are at variance with mine. I would wish the inquiry to be official, and in such a way that whatever may be the decision come to, it may be come to in my absence.

"With respect to the Slave Trade,[1] I think nothing of it, for there will be Slave Trade always as long as Turkey and Egypt buy the slaves, and it may be Zobeir will or might see his interests to stop it in some manner.

"I will, therefore, sum up my opinion, viz. that I would willingly take the responsibility of taking Zobeir up with me, if after an interview with Sir E. Baring and Nubar Pasha, they felt the mystic feeling I could trust him, and which mystic feeling I felt I had for him to-night when I met him at Chérif Pasha's house. Zobeir could have nothing to gain in hurting me, and I would have no idea of fear. In this affair my desire, I own, would be to take Zobeir. I cannot exactly say why I feel towards him thus, and I feel sure that his going would settle the Soudan affair to the benefit of Her Majesty's and Egyptian Governments, and I would bear the responsibility of recommending it."

The interview between General Gordon and Zobeir Pasha took place on the afternoon of January 26 in the presence of Nubar Pasha, Sir Evelyn Wood, Colonel Stewart, Colonel Watson, Giegler Pasha, and myself.[2] A shorthand writer and an interpreter were present. The scene was dramatic and interesting. Both General Gordon and Zobeir Pasha were labouring under great excitement and spoke with vehemence. Zobeir Pasha did not deny that his son had rebelled against the Egyptian Government, but he denied his own complicity in the rebellion. General Gordon's case rested mainly upon the letter addressed by Zobeir

---

[1] General Gordon's instructions given to him in London, contained the following passage: "You should pay especial consideration to the question of the steps that may usefully be taken to counteract the stimulus which it is feared may possibly be given to the Slave Trade by the present insurrectionary movement, and by the withdrawal of the Egyptian authority from the Interior."

[2] A full account of this interview is given in *Egypt*, No. 12 of 1884, pp. 38-41.

Pasha to his son, which was found by Gessi. This letter could not be produced at the time, but I saw a copy of it subsequently. If genuine, it afforded sufficient proof of Zobeir Pasha's complicity in his son's rebellion.

After this interview was over and Zobeir Pasha had retired, General Gordon's Memorandum, in which he had proposed that Zobeir Pasha should accompany him to Khartoum, was discussed. All present, more especially Colonel Stewart, were opposed to sending him. I had always been rather in favour of employing Zobeir Pasha in the Soudan. Moreover, I saw that the main difficulty in the way of carrying out General Gordon's policy was the absence of any strong local men to whom to entrust the future government of the Soudan, and especially of Khartoum. I believed that, by giving Zobeir Pasha money and an influential position, it might be possible to secure his friendship towards General Gordon; and there could be no doubt that, if this friendship could be secured, he would prove a valuable instrument in the execution of General Gordon's policy. The arguments on the other side were, however, strong.

In the first place, the employment of Zobeir Pasha would be sure to raise an outcry in England. I should not have minded this, if I could have felt certain that his employment was desirable. But was it desirable? I was not at that moment prepared to take the responsibility of answering this question in the affirmative. The weight of authoritative opinion was decidedly against sending him to the Soudan. My wish was to follow General Gordon's lead, but he himself hesitated as to what course to pursue. It was impossible to say how far this impulsive man was animated, not so much by a consideration of the political necessities of the case, as by a chivalrous feeling that possibly in former times he might have done some injustice to Zobeir Pasha, and that he wished to atone for such injustice by giving his old adversary an opportunity of retrieving his position. The argument, however, which convinced me that, for the time being at all events, it was undesirable to employ Zobeir Pasha, was that forty-eight hours before I received General Gordon's Memorandum proposing that Zobeir Pasha should accompany him to the Soudan, I had received, through Lord Granville, a proposal, also emanating from General Gordon, that Zobeir Pasha should be deported to Cyprus.[1] A few minutes' conversation with Zobeir Pasha, and a "mystic feeling" which that conversation had engendered, had led General Gordon to jump from one extreme to the other. Instead of being considered as an enemy, Zobeir Pasha was to be treated as a trusted ally, on whose conduct the success of the mission was to depend. I have no confidence in opinions based on mystic feelings. Colonel Stewart subsequently (March 11) wrote to me from Khartoum: "I never saw or met any one whose mind and imagination are so constantly active as Gordon's. For him to grasp an idea is to act on it at once." Short as my personal acquaintance had been with General Gordon, it was clear to me that his various *obiter dicta* were not to be regarded as expressions of his matured opinions. It might eventually be desirable to employ Zobeir Pasha, but it was necessary to give General Gordon more time to think over the matter before taking action.

Under these circumstances, I had no hesitation in deciding against the immediate employment of Zobeir Pasha. "At General Gordon's suggestion," I wrote to Lord Granville, "I informed Zobeir Pasha that he would be allowed to remain in Cairo, and that the future treatment he would receive at the hands of the Egyptian Government depended in a great measure upon whether General Gordon returned alive and well from the Soudan, and upon whether, whilst residing at Cairo, Zobeir Pasha used his influence to facilitate the execution of the policy upon which the Government had determined." Thus the matter was settled for the moment.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 455.

On the night of January 26, General Gordon and Colonel Stewart left Cairo on the ill-fated expedition from which they were destined never to return. General Gordon was in excellent spirits and hopeful of success. My own heart was heavy within me. I knew the difficulties of the task which had to be accomplished. I had seen General Gordon. Nothing could have been more friendly than his behaviour. The main lines of his policy appeared wise and practical. Nevertheless, I was not relieved of the doubts which I originally entertained as to the wisdom of employing him. Manifestly, in spite of many fine and attractive qualities, he was even more eccentric than I had originally supposed. However, the die was cast. A comet of no common magnitude had been launched on the political firmament of the Soudan. It was difficult to predict its course. It now only remained for me to do my best to help General Gordon, and to trust to the shrewd common sense of his companion, Colonel Stewart, to act in some degree as a corrective to the impulsiveness of his wayward chief.[1]

---

[1] I may mention that during the short period whilst General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were at Cairo I was most unfortunately afflicted with a severe sore throat, which well-nigh deprived me of any powers of speech. The health of individuals in responsible positions, more especially at critical moments, has a more serious bearing on public affairs than is often supposed. During the Egyptian Conference, which sat in London in the summer of 1885, the course of events was, I am inclined to think, a good deal influenced by the fact that Lord Granville had a rather unusually severe attack of gout. Further, I may mention that whilst the question of Zobeir Pasha's despatch to the Soudan was under discussion, Mr. Gladstone was ill in bed. (See further remarks on this subject, p. 531.)

# CHAPTER XXIV

## GORDON'S JOURNEY TO KHARTOUM

### JANUARY 26–FEBRUARY 18, 1884

**Contradictory nature of General Gordon's proposals—The Darfour Sultan—General Gordon proposes to visit the Mahdi—Or to retire to the Equator—He issues a Proclamation announcing the independence of the Soudan — The Slavery Proclamation — General Gordon arrives at Khartoum—He is sanguine of success—Colonel Stewart's warning.**

ON February 1, Colonel Stewart wrote to me from Korosko: "I shall be very glad when we are actually at Khartoum and face to face with the situation. Gordon is so full of energy and action that he cannot get along without doing something, and at present he revenges himself for his enforced inactivity by writing letters, despatches, etc., and sending telegrams."

Now, in fact, began a period during which I received a large number of very bewildering and contradictory messages from General Gordon. They began immediately after he left Cairo. Sir Henry Gordon subsequently wrote: "It was no part of General Gordon's character to form a definite opinion from imperfectly known facts, and to adhere obstinately to that opinion, notwithstanding the evidence of altered circumstances and new elements." Much may be forgiven to fraternal affection. The truth, however, is that General Gordon's main defect was that he was constantly forming strong opinions on imperfectly known facts. Extreme consistency in political matters is certainly not a cardinal virtue. It has, indeed, been characterised by Emerson as "the hobgoblin of little minds." But the peculiarity of General Gordon was that, in great things as in small, his revulsions of opinion were so rapid and so complete that it was almost impossible to follow him. On March 11, Colonel Stewart wrote to me from Khartoum: "I most sincerely congratulate you on the interruption in the telegraphic communication.[1] The shower of telegrams which we have been sending you of late must have acted somewhat like a cold *douche.* Yesterday, I told Gordon that his numerous communications might tend to confuse you, but he replied that he was merely giving you different aspects of the same question." General Gordon's communications did, indeed, tend to confuse me. In addition to the other difficulties of the situation, this further difficulty was now superadded, that I had, if I may be allowed to coin such an expression, to learn Gordonese. I had to distinguish between such proposals of General Gordon as represented his matured opinions, and others which were mere bubbles thrown up by his imaginative brain, probably forgotten as soon as made, and, therefore, unworthy of serious attention. I do not say that I always succeeded in eliminating the dross in order to arrive at the valuable residuum. I can only say that the task was one of great difficulty, and that I did my best to accomplish it.

---

[1] Before telegraphic communication between Khartoum and Cairo was permanently interrupted, several temporary breaks took place owing to the line being in a very bad condition. Lord Granville expressed much the same idea as Colonel Stewart. On March 21, he wrote to me: "I am not sure that the stoppage of communication with Gordon for a time is the greatest of misfortunes either for himself or us."

The policy of setting up the local Sultans did not begin well. The Darfour Prince, who accompanied General Gordon, was a wretched creature. On January 29, General Gordon telegraphed to me: "The Emir Abdul-Shakour has taken to drinking." On the 30th, Colonel Stewart wrote in his diary: "The Darfour Sultan decided to get out here (Assouan) and not to come with us any farther." Two days previously (28th), Gordon wrote to me: "Please listen to no telegrams from the Sultan of Darfour's family. I have explained to him that, having placed him at Dongola, whence clear roads exist to Darfour, we wash our hands of him, for it is his work to raise the tribes in his favour. We have nought to do with him and will not support him, for we cannot do so." The Darfour Prince was manifestly deficient in the qualities necessary to carry out a policy such as that projected by General Gordon. He got as far as Dongola, where he remained for some months, and then returned to Cairo.

Whilst General Gordon was on his way from Brindisi to Port Said, he gave the following message for Mr. Clifford Lloyd to an English officer, who was a fellow-passenger on the same ship: "Tell Lloyd, no panics. It is possible that I may go to the Mahdi and not be heard of for two months, for he might keep me as a hostage for Zobeir. You can tell Lloyd this when you get to Cairo, so that he can publish it at the right time, if necessary." Owing to Mr. Clifford Lloyd being confined to his house through illness, I did not hear of this message until General Gordon was half-way to Khartoum. Looking to General Gordon's very singular character, I thought it not impossible that he would carry out the idea of going to the Mahdi. Had he done so, he would certainly have been detained a prisoner for life, unless a

British force had been sent to release him. I, therefore, telegraphed to him: "I hope you will give me a positive assurance that you will on no account put yourself voluntarily in the power of the Mahdi. The question is not a personal one. There would, in my opinion, be the strongest political objections to your risking a visit to the Mahdi." In reply, General Gordon telegraphed to me that he had no intention of visiting the Mahdi. I do not believe that he ever seriously contemplated this step. It was merely an idea which flashed through his brain for a moment. But, had he gone, the consequences both to himself and, possibly, to his country, would have been so serious that it was as well to obtain from him an assurance that he would not give effect to this harebrained project.

I turn to another incident which occurred about this time. On February 1, General Gordon wrote to me from Korosko enclosing a letter for the King of the Belgians. In this letter, he spoke of going up the White Nile, taking possession of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatorial Provinces, and then handing them over to the King of the Belgians. I received this letter on February 9. This project did not appear to me to be feasible. Moreover, I was always afraid of General Gordon acting on the impulse of the moment without sufficient reflection. I, therefore, telegraphed to Lord Granville: "I do not think that General Gordon should be allowed, at all events for the present, to go anywhere south of Khartoum." At the same time, I sent the following private telegram to Lord Granville: "Do I understand rightly that I have full powers to give Gordon positive orders not to proceed beyond a certain point, if I think it necessary to do so? I believe he would obey orders, but I doubt his caring much about suggestions. If he comes to any harm, it will be the worst thing that has happened yet. I am more anxious lest his total disregard for his own safety should lead to further serious difficulties than almost anything else." On February 10, Lord Granville, in reply to my inquiry, sent me the following private telegram: "You have full powers. Instruct Gordon not to proceed at present south of Khartoum." This was followed, on February 11, by an official telegram, which was to the following effect: "Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that General Gordon should not, at present, go beyond Khartoum." I communicated the views of the British Government on this point to General Gordon on February 12, and in reply received a telegram, stating that he would not go south of Khartoum without my permission.

It may be as well, for the sake of clearness, that I should anticipate this narrative so far as to state, in the present place, what subsequently occurred in connection with this particular point. On March 9, General Gordon sent me several telegrams. In one of them he proposed to resign his commission in the British army, to "take all steamers and stores up to the Equatorial and Bahr-el-Ghazal provinces, and consider those provinces as under the King of the Belgians." Later on, I shall have to deal with the reply which Lord Granville gave to the various proposals then under discussion. I need here only state that, in communicating to General Gordon the views of the British Government, I instructed him to hold on at Khartoum until I could communicate with Her Majesty's Government, and I told him that he should on no account proceed to the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatorial provinces. In his Journal, General Gordon complained bitterly of not having been allowed to proceed up the White Nile. Writing on October 5, 1884, he said: "Her Majesty's Government ought to have taken the bold step of speaking out and saying, *SHIFT FOR YOURSELF in March,*[1] when I could have done so, and not now when I am in honour bound to the people after six months' bothering warfare. Not only did Baring not say 'Shift for yourself,' but he put a veto upon my going to the Equator, *vide* his telegrams in Stewart's Journal."

As regards General Gordon's complaint on this subject, I have the following observations to make.

In the first place, I doubt whether General Gordon would in any case have attempted to go up the White Nile. If he had done so, he would have been obliged to abandon the garrisons of Khartoum and other places, and this, as Colonel Stewart wrote to me so early as March 4, he was "the last man in the world to do."

In the second place, if General Gordon had made the attempt, I believe he would have failed. Both he and his followers would almost certainly have been taken prisoners by the Mahdi.

In the third place, in spite of the entry in General Gordon's Journal, to which I have alluded above, it is clear that, as a matter of fact, the instructions received from me on this particular point did not hamper his action. I received an undated telegram from him, on April 16, 1884, which was to the following effect: "I consider myself free to act according to circumstances. I shall hold on here as long as I can, and if I can suppress the rebellion, I shall do so. If I cannot, I shall retire to the Equator." Colonel Stewart, at the same time, telegraphed that he did not think it would be possible to get to Berber. "I am inclined," he added, "to think my retreat will perhaps be safer by the Equator. I shall, therefore, follow the fortunes of General Gordon." Mr. Power, the British Consular Agent at Khartoum, telegraphed to the same effect. These messages constitute a sufficient proof that, in spite of my telegram of February 12, General Gordon did not think himself precluded from retiring up the White Nile, should he have thought fit to do so.

---

[1] In this and other quotations from General Gordon's Journal, the capitals and italics, save in a few cases to which attention is specially drawn, are in the original.

It will be borne in mind that General Gordon took with him two Proclamations, one of which stated that the Egyptian Government had decided to withdraw their troops from the Soudan, whilst in the other it was stated that General Gordon was appointed Governor-General of the Soudan.[1]

On February 1, Colonel Stewart wrote to me from Korosko: "It seems to me that at present the most suitable plan is not to publish abroad throughout the Soudan that we mean to leave. Before doing so, we ought at any rate to place the kinglets in their several districts. Whether it will be possible to induce Gordon to remain silent in the matter is, however, more than doubtful."

On February 11, General Gordon and Colonel Stewart arrived at Berber. The following entry occurs in Colonel Stewart's Journal, dated February 12: "I was called up at 5 A.M. by General Gordon, who, having pondered deeply all night, had come to the decision of opening the Pandora box, and openly proclaiming the divorce of the Soudan from Egypt, and the forming of local militias, and the appointment of Soudan officials in every important post. At 8 A.M., Hussein Pasha Khalifa, and Mohammed Tahir, the judge of the civil court, a man we have every reason to believe is a bosom-friend of the Mahdi, made their appearance. With their assistance, and after showing them the secret Firmans, which the General thought necessary to show them to allay their alarm at the overturning of the Khedive's authority, a Proclamation was drawn up. This Proclamation appointed a Committee, or provisional Government consisting of six of the most influential Notables of the Mudirieh, and proclaimed that the Mudirieh was from henceforth independent of Cairo, but subject to General Gordon as Governor-General and Commissioner of the British Government. The Proclamation was affixed to the gate, and caused a good deal of excitement; so far as I am able to judge, the people appeared to approve of it."

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 446.

On February 13, the following further entry occurs in Colonel Stewart's Journal: "At 2 P.M., Hussein Pasha Khalifa and the leading men of the province assembled in secret conclave, and General Gordon, after a speech, showed them the secret Firman. This document caused the most profound astonishment, but in so far as one could judge from what they said, nothing could exceed their delight. We have tried to fathom what those present really thought, and we are told that it was a mistake to have shown it. We are told that the probable effect will be to lead those who read the Firman to conclude that all the concessions made by General Gordon, viz.:—half-tax (*sic*), were made merely with a view to getting the troops out of the country without danger, and to leave the people to stew in their own juice. On consideration, it may perhaps have been a mistake to show this Firman, but General Gordon says that, as the object of his mission is to get out of the country and to leave them independent, that he could not have put a sharper spur into them to organise their government than by this action. It is certain that they fondly believe that by some means or other they would be rid of the Cairo Government, and remain independent under General Gordon, who would give them greater local liberties and not interfere with their darling slave-trade. As regards my own opinion on the matter, I fully admit that the question of showing or not showing the Firman is a difficult one to answer. Perhaps I should have preferred following Nubar Pasha's advice and delaying any action in the matter till a later period, when I could have better judged what would have been the result, or at any rate, till the political situation had become clearer."

In a letter to me of the same date, February 13, Colonel Stewart wrote: "You will see by my Journal that Gordon has taken his leap in the dark and shown his secret Firman. How it will act, and what will be the result, goodness only knows. At any rate, the deed is done and we must now abide by the result and hope for the best."

General Gordon says in his Journal (p. 285) that the Khedive's Firman — by which he meant the Proclamation which was given to him in Cairo—was not "promulgated" in the Soudan, and the same statement is repeated by the editor of the Journal (Mr. Egmont Hake) in a note on p. 309. It is clear, however, from the facts narrated above, that, after the events which took place at Berber, the existence of the Firman must have been known throughout the Soudan.

There can be little doubt that General Gordon committed an error of judgment in showing the Firman at Berber. News of the intended abandonment of the Soudan had, indeed, reached Khartoum prior to that date. But it was only half believed. It was not till after the events which took place at Berber on February 12 and 13, that the intentions of the Egyptian Government became widely known. Sir Reginald Wingate[1] alludes to the "fatal Proclamation which gave the Soudan away," and he has informed me verbally that his researches have led him to the conclusion that General Gordon's difficulties were greatly increased by the action taken at Berber.

If General Gordon had not stated the fact himself, and if we did not know something of his peculiar character, it would be almost incredible that he should have shown such an important document as the Khedive's Firman to the Sheikhs at Berber without having fully mastered its contents. Such, however, is the case. He appears subsequently to have seen that he made a mistake in showing the Firman, for, on November 9, 1884, the following entry occurs in his Journal (p. 309): "If the Mahdi got this (*i.e.* the Firman), he would have crowed, though he may know of it,[2] for I showed it, *not knowing well its contents*,[1] to Hussein Pasha Khalifa (*vide* Stewart's Journal, which went down and in which I criticised my having done so)."

---

[1] *Mahdiism, etc.*, p. 121. Father Ohrwalder also says: "Gordon himself committed a mistake by which he gave a death-blow to himself and his mission. On his way to Khartoum, he stopped at Berber and interviewed the Mudir Hussein Pasha Khalifa; he imprudently told him that he had come up to remove the Egyptian garrisons, as Egypt had abandoned the Soudan. At Metemmeh also . . . he committed a similar imprudence, by giving the same information to Haj Ali Wad Saad, the Emir of Metemmeh."—*Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp*, p. 123.

[2] On October 22, *i.e.* eighteen days before General Gordon made this entry in his Journal, he had received a letter from the Mahdi (Appendix to *Journal*, p. 522), in which the latter gave a list of the documents which had fallen into his possession at the time of Colonel Stewart's death. *Inter alia*, the Mahdi wrote: "Also we have seen your telegram dated August 28, 1884, stating that, as for the Firman emanating from the Khedive to all the Nobles and Notables and people of the Soudan, announcing the withdrawal of the troops of the Government from it, and their evacuation of the country, and leaving it to the Soudanese to appoint rulers of the country from among the natives,—you had not been able to communicate it, or to show it to any one on account of what had taken place." The receipt of this letter is recorded in General Gordon's Journal (p. 220) in the following characteristic words written on October 22, 1884: "The Mahdi's letter is to relate how he captured the post, etc., *Abbas* (the steamer in which Stewart went down the Nile), etc. My answer was that I did not care who had surrendered and who had been captured. As for these letters, I cannot make head or tail of them, so I leave them to the Arabic scholars of the Universities." General Gordon knew very little Arabic, neither does he appear

I now turn to another episode. In 1877, a Convention was signed between the British and Egyptian Governments having for its object the abolition of slavery and of the Slave Trade in Egypt. The Convention was not to come into operation in the Soudan till the year 1888. It would, under any circumstances, have been very difficult to apply the Convention to the Soudan. General Gordon knew this. So early as October 11, 1883, Lord Granville wrote privately to me: "About slavery, I was very keen at first, and the first cold water I got was, of all people in the world, from Colonel Gordon, who seemed to me sensible on the matter." In other words, in spite of his anti-slavery sympathies, and although he had himself been a witness of the horrors of the Slave Trade, General Gordon recognised the facts of the situation more fully than his friends, who, in so far as the incident about to be narrated is concerned, became his critics.

On February 12, Colonel Stewart, who was then at Berber, made the following entry in his Journal: "A deputation of the Notables came to inquire whether the Treaty, which had been printed and published by General Gordon, in November 1877, by which all slaves would be freed in 1889, was in his present programme. General Gordon, knowing the utter futility of saying 'Yes,' replied 'No,' and published a Proclamation to this effect. It is probable that this Proclamation interested and pleased the people more than anything else."

A few days later, the Proclamation was published

---

to have taken pains to get Arabic documents properly translated to him. This, added to his habitual carelessness in the transaction of business, led him into the committal of many mistakes which might have been avoided.

[1] The italics are not in the original.

in Khartoum. It was to the following effect: "My sincerest desire is to adopt a course of action which shall lead to public tranquillity, and knowing your regret at the severe measures taken by the Government for the suppression of the slave traffic, and the seizure and punishment of all concerned, according to the Convention and Decrees, I confer upon you these rights, that henceforth none shall interfere with your property; whoever has slaves, shall have full right to their services and full control over them. This Proclamation is a proof of my clemency towards you."

This Proclamation naturally caused some excitement in England. That a man who had heretofore been considered a champion of the anti-slavery cause, should, immediately on his arrival at Khartoum, sanction slavery and thus run counter to the traditions of his previous career, seemed, indeed, astonishing. The special supporters of the anti-slavery movement were up in arms. Party managers, moreover, were not likely to let slip such a good opportunity for attacking the Government. On February 18, Sir Stafford Northcote, speaking in the House of Commons, asked, amidst the "loud cheers" of his supporters, whether "General Gordon's powers extended to the issue of such a Proclamation?"

The Government were, in fact, in an embarrassing position. It was obvious from the first that, if the Soudan were abandoned, a stimulus would be given to slavery and the Slave Trade. Nothing General Gordon could have said or done could have acted as an antidote. He rightly judged that he had to look to the main object of his mission, which was to evacuate the Soudan. He sought, therefore, to make some capital out of permitting the continuance of an abuse which he was powerless to arrest. Without doubt, under ordinary circumstances, it would have been better, if he could not remedy the evil, at all events not to have given the sanction of his name to its continuance. But the circumstances in which General Gordon was placed were far from being ordinary. The difficulties of carrying out his task were such that he could not afford to miss a point in the game. He was free from the peculiar feature which, according to many foreign critics, is such a prominent defect in the English character, and which, if it be not cant, is nearly allied to cant. I mean that particular phase of thought which, although it cannot deny that certain unpleasant facts exist, hesitates to draw the logical conclusion from their existence, and hesitates still more to make any open acknowledgment of their existence. General Gordon probably reasoned thus: "As I cannot stop slavery, there can be no harm in my saying so, and in acting accordingly." A section of British public opinion, on the other hand, reasoned somewhat as follows: "We know that you cannot stop slavery, but you had better hide the unpleasant fact from the eyes of the world."

General Gordon's action in this matter appeared to me to be justifiable. I, therefore, determined to support him to the best of my ability. On February 21, General Gordon telegraphed to me as follows: "Several telegrams have been sent from the press asking about what I said respecting slaves. The question asked me was this: Did I insist on the liberation of slaves in 1889, as per Treaty of 1877? I answered that the Treaty would not be enforced in 1889 by me, which, considering the determination of Her Majesty's Government respecting the Soudan, was a self-evident fact. The question is one of slave-holding, not of slave-hunting, and, in my opinion, that Treaty of 1877 will never be carried out in Cairo as to slave-holding."

I sent the following reply: "About your Slavery Proclamation, I am sure I quite understand your reasons. I have telegraphed home to say that I think you are quite right. You are doing admirably, and may rely on my full support in everything."

At the same time (February 21), I sent the following telegram to Lord Granville: "It is only natural that the Proclamation issued by General Gordon at Khartoum should have caused a good deal of surprise in England. But in reality his declaration with regard to the buying and selling of slaves is of very little practical importance, and it is easy enough to understand his reasons for making it.

"It was obvious from the first that a revival of slavery in the Soudan would result from the policy of abandonment. Nothing that General Gordon can do at Khartoum will prevent this revival; knowing that he is powerless to stop slavery in the future, General Gordon evidently intends using it as a concession to the people which will strengthen his position in other matters. I consider that he has succeeded admirably so far, and I sincerely trust that he will be allowed full liberty of action to complete the execution of his general plans. I have informed him that my personal opinion is entirely in his favour, and that I will give him all the support in my power.

"As to the best means of preventing slavery, the subject will have to be considered carefully and discussed afresh, in view of the altered circumstances of the situation."

After this, the subject was allowed to drop. The *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote: "The Government stood by their agent with commendable courage, and, as is usual when responsible authorities well-informed as to facts resist the clamour of ill-informed public opinion, the cry promptly subsided."

On February 18, General Gordon reached Khartoum. His arrival was announced to me by Mr. Power, in the following telegram: "Gordon arrived here this morning, and met with a wonderful demonstration of welcome on the part of the population. The state of affairs here, since it was heard that Gordon was coming, gives every promise of the speedy pacification of this portion of the Soudan. His speech to the people was received with the greatest enthusiasm."

On the following day (February 19) Mr. Power sent me another telegram. "Gordon," he said, "met with a great reception yesterday. Has ordered all white troops to leave for Cairo. Soudani soldiers kept in Khartoum. Has formed Council of twelve Notables, Arabs, to sit with him. Burned all old records of debts against people, and instruments of torture in Government House. Colonel Stewart at prison striking irons off all prisoners of war, debtors, and men who have long ago served their sentences. Gordon sends Ibrahim Pasha down with detachment of white troops. Everything is now safe here for troops and Europeans. He is giving the people more than they expected from the Mahdi."

General Gordon was at this time hopeful as regards the future. Without doubt, he was over-sanguine, but at the time a reasonable prospect seemed to exist that he would be able to carry out his mission successfully. He had begun well. On February 12, he telegraphed to me: "Do not fear for the Khartoum garrison. It can come by Berber, if necessary, but neither the men who attacked Baker, nor those who attacked Hicks, will ever leave tribal limits. What had to be feared was the rising of other peoples, which I trust I have prevented by liberal concessions." Again, on February 14, he telegraphed to me: "I believe you need not give yourself any further anxiety about this part of the Soudan. The people, great and small, are heartily glad to be free of a union which only caused them sorrow."

To a certain extent, General Gordon was right in his view of the situation. The tribes round Khartoum were wavering. If they openly joined the Mahdi, the difficulties of the situation would be greatly increased. The only chance of ensuring their friendship was by making liberal concessions. General Gordon had made such concessions. He had issued a Proclamation sanctioning slavery, which, although it caused consternation in London, was hailed with delight at Khartoum. He had remitted taxes. He had destroyed the bonds of the usurers—always a most popular proceeding in an Oriental country. He had released prisoners who were unjustly confined. His mere presence at Khartoum was interpreted as a guarantee that the future government of the Soudan would be less oppressive than that of the past. Lord Granville's buoyant spirits at once rose. On February 15, he wrote privately to me: "It was an anxious moment while Gordon was in the desert. When he gets at the head of 6000 men, it becomes more of a normal situation. It looks as if he would succeed."[1]

---

[1] On another occasion (December 28, 1883), speaking of Egyptian affairs generally, Lord Granville wrote to me: "I was delighted to see that you do not feel the alarm, which is felt here, and apparently in Egypt. I am perpetually reproaching myself with being too optimistic. The difficulties are great, especially the enormous one of finance, but they ought not to be insurmountable." I do not think that I was ever very optimistic about Egyptian affairs. Indeed, as regards finance, I at one time erred somewhat on the side of undue pessimism. What I felt during this period was that, amidst all the excitement that then prevailed, and which resulted in some very wild and ill-considered suggestions being occasionally made, it was necessary for me to keep my head, to ascertain so far as was

The shrewd Scotchman, who accompanied General Gordon, was not, however, carried away by the jubilation of the moment. On February 17, Colonel Stewart wrote to me: "The problem of evacuating the Soudan is continually in our minds. I must confess the more one looks at it, the more difficult it becomes. However, perhaps, when actually tackled, it will resolve itself somehow or other."

I have already stated that it was, in my opinion, a mistake ever to have sent General Gordon to the Soudan. Once sent, however, the best chance of success lay in adopting the course advocated by the *Pall Mall Gazette.* General Gordon should have had "*carte blanche* to do the best that could be done," so long as he conformed to the broad lines of the policy which he was sent to carry out. I saw this from the first, and regulated my conduct accordingly. My difficulty lay in discovering, amidst the numerous contradictory opinions that emanated from General Gordon, what it was he really wished should be done. Unfortunately, a section of the British public did not realise sufficiently the importance of giving General Gordon a free hand. In spite of his popularity, directly he made proposals which ran counter to the current of preconceived public opinion, a chorus of disapprobation was raised, in which some of General Gordon's warmest friends and supporters joined.

---

possible the real facts of the case, to consider carefully the merits of any proposal before acting upon it, and especially to avoid the use of sensational or exaggerated language. On April 13, 1884, General Gordon sent me a telegram which I did not receive till six years later (March 26, 1890), and in which he exhorted me to depart "from that delicious diplomatic calm which is Paradise." He frequently used language of a somewhat similar description in his Journal. The "diplomatic calm" existed in a somewhat less degree than General Gordon supposed. Its appearance was mainly due to the fact that, in my opinion, the greater the difficulties, the more does it behove any one in a responsible position to maintain a clear judgment, and not be carried away by sentiment or rash advice.

The Government accepted the principle that they must follow General Gordon's advice. Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons, on February 12, said that it was the duty of the Government "to beware of interfering with General Gordon's plans generally." They adhered to this principle, at all events in respect to the Slavery Proclamation, with the result that the agitation against it speedily died a natural death.

The Soudan question was, indeed, as Colonel Stewart said, to be solved "somehow or other," but its solution was to bring to the British Government the political discredit which always attaches itself to failure. It was to cause a great waste of public treasure and to involve the sacrifice of many valuable lives, including those of the two brave men on whose actions the attention, not only of England and Egypt, but it may also be said of all Europe was then fixed.

# CHAPTER XXV

## ZOBEIR PASHA

February 18–March 16, 1884

The turning-point of General Gordon's Mission—General Gordon's Memorandum of February 8—Change in General Gordon's views —He asks for Zobeir Pasha—I advise that Zobeir Pasha should be General Gordon's successor—The Government reject this proposal —General Gordon proposes to "smash up" the Mahdi—Conflicting policies advocated by General Gordon—His Proclamation stating that British troops were coming to Khartoum—General Gordon's neglect of his instructions—I again urge the employment of Zobeir Pasha—Difficulty of understanding General Gordon's telegrams—Colonel Stewart recommends that Zobeir Pasha should be sent—I support this view—General Gordon recommends that the Berber-Suakin route should be opened—The Government object to the employment of Zobeir Pasha—I again urge the employment of Zobeir Pasha—General Gordon's communications to the *Times*' correspondent—The tribes round Khartoum waver—The Government reject the Zobeir proposal—I instruct General Gordon to hold on to Khartoum—I again urge on the Government the necessity of employing Zobeir Pasha—The proposal is rejected—I remonstrate—Final rejection of the Zobeir proposal—Were the Government right in their decision?

Everything of political importance connected with General Gordon's Mission took place within a few weeks of his arrival at Khartoum. The essential facts connected with the history of those eventful weeks can be summed up in a few words. General Gordon proposed that Zobeir Pasha should govern the Soudan as a feudatory of the Egyptian Government. Colonel Stewart and myself at first hesitated as to the desirability of sending Zobeir Pasha to the Soudan, but after a brief interval we came round to General Gordon's opinion. The British Government would not agree to the employment of Zobeir Pasha. Subsequently, the tribes round Khartoum rose. General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were besieged. It was clear that General Gordon's political mission had failed, and from that moment there only remained an important military question to decide, viz., whether a British military force should or should not be sent to the relief of Khartoum.

The broad facts of the case are already well known. They were set forth in the Parliamentary papers, which were published at the time. I am not, however, aware that any attempt has as yet been made to give so clear a *précis* of the whole of the correspondence as to enable a thorough appreciation to be formed of the parts played respectively by those who were the principal actors in this political drama—I might almost say political tragedy. I propose, at the risk of being tedious, to make such a *précis*.

On February 8, General Gordon, who was then at Abu Hamed, addressed to me an important Memorandum. He wrote: "In spite of all that has occurred, I feel satisfied that the prestige of the Cairo Government, except in so far as the conduct of their troops in the field is concerned, is not seriously shaken, and that the people still continue to look up to the Cairo Government as the direct representatives of the Sultan as Khalif, and would look with horror on a complete separation." He proposed that the Egyptian Government "should continue to maintain their position as a Suzerain Power, nominate the Governor-General and Moudirs"—who were to be Soudanese—"and act as a supreme Court of Appeal. Their controlling influence should, however, be a strictly moral one, and limited to giving advice." "I would, therefore," he added, "earnestly beg that evacuation, but not abandonment, be the programme to be followed, and that the Firman, with which I am provided, be changed into one recognising moral control and suzerainty."

Accompanying this Memorandum, were some remarks by Colonel Stewart upon General Gordon's proposals, to which he gave a qualified support. He said that he "did not quite agree with General Gordon that the prestige of Cairo had not been greatly diminished." General Gordon's Memorandum and Colonel Stewart's observations did not reach me till February 23.

In the meanwhile, I had received a private letter from Colonel Stewart, dated Korosko, February 1, in which the following passage occurred: "Gordon is apparently still hankering after Zobeir, says he feels a sympathy for him, etc. It is impossible to say that he may not of a sudden request him to be sent up. Should such be the case, I trust you will not let him leave Cairo unless under very cogent reasons. I am convinced his coming up would be a dangerous experiment. It is also quite possible that he may not have the influence attributed to him, now that it is said his Bazingers (slave soldiers) have ceased to exist." On the other hand, General Gordon wrote to me from Abu Hamed on February 8: "With respect to Zobeir, he is the only man who is fit for Governor-General of the Soudan if we wish it to be quiet, and as for his touching me, he would have no object to do so. I wish you would see more of this remarkable man. . . . I wish Lady Baring would see him."

There can be no doubt that, as General Gordon approached Khartoum and as he became better informed of the situation in the Soudan, not only did the optimism of the views, which he had previously held, fade away, but also his sympathy for the people of the country led him to forget the main object for the accomplishment of which he had been sent to the Soudan. But a few months were to elapse before the same man who had insisted that, in his instructions, it should be stated that the policy of evacuating the Soudan "should on no account be changed," was to write in his Journal: "I hate her Majesty's Government for their leaving the Soudan after having caused all its troubles."

The first indication I got of the rapid change which was to take place in General Gordon's views was contained in a letter from Colonel Stewart, dated Berber, February 13, in which he wrote: "Gordon is so full of sympathy for these people that he is inclined to use every effort to mitigate the effect of our withdrawal, but I am convinced no effort of his will prevent the reign of anarchy. Personally, although I regret the unavoidable, still I am persuaded that the evacuation policy is the right one, and that it will probably be in the end the best for all parties."

Immediately upon his arrival at Khartoum, on February 18, General Gordon sent me the following telegram: "In a previous Memorandum,[1] I alluded to the arrival of an epoch when whites, fellaheen troops, civilian employés, women and children of deceased soldiers—in short, the Egyptian element in the Soudan—will be removed; when we shall be face to face with the Soudan administration, and when I must withdraw from the Soudan. I have stated that to withdraw without being able to place a successor in my seat would be the signal for general anarchy throughout the country, which, though all Egyptian element was withdrawn, would be a misfortune, and inhuman.

---

[1] This is the Memorandum of February 8, which did not reach me till the 23rd. *Vide ante*, pp. 480-481.

"Also, I have stated that, even if I placed a man in my seat unsupported by any Government, the same anarchy would ensue.

"Her Majesty's Government could, I think, without responsibility in money or men, give the commission to my successor on certain terms which I will detail hereafter. If this solution is examined, we shall find that a somewhat analogous case exists in Afghanistan, where Her Majesty's Government give moral support to the Ameer, and go even beyond that in giving the Ameer a subsidy, which would not be needed in the present case.

"I distinctly state that if Her Majesty's Government gave a Commission to my successor, I recommend neither a subsidy nor men being given. I would select and give a commission to some man, and promise him the moral support of Her Majesty's Government and nothing more.

"It may be argued that Her Majesty's Government would thus be giving nominal and moral support to a man who will rule over a Slave State, but so is Afghanistan, as also Socotra.

"This nomination of my successor must, I think, be direct from Her Majesty's Government.

"As for the man, Her Majesty's Government should select one above all others, namely, Zobeir. He alone has the ability to rule the Soudan, and would be universally accepted by the Soudan. He should be made K.C.M.G., and given presents." After stating the terms under which Zobeir Pasha should be nominated, General Gordon continued: "Zobeir's exile at Cairo for ten years, amidst all the late events and his mixing with Europeans, must have had a great effect on his character. Zobeir's nomination, under the moral countenance of Her Majesty's Government, would bring all the merchants, European and others, back to the Soudan in a short time. I have asked Stewart to give his opinions independently of mine, in order to prevent a one-sided view. He is a first-rate man." At the same time, Colonel Stewart sent me the following telegram: "With reference to Gordon's telegram of to-day, I think that the policy he urges would greatly facilitate our retirement from the country. As to whether Zobeir Pasha is the man who should be nominated, I think we have hardly yet a sufficient knowledge of the country to be able to form an opinion. It is, however, probable that whoever is nominated will be accepted for a time."

I thought that General Gordon, when at Cairo, had made his proposal to utilise Zobeir Pasha's services without sufficient deliberation. When, however, I found that, after an interval of three weeks and after having had an opportunity of judging of the situation at Khartoum, General Gordon still thought that Zobeir Pasha's services might be utilised, it appeared to me safe to assume that he was expressing something in the nature of a matured opinion, and that he was not, as so frequently happened, dashing off an ill-considered proposal on the spur of the moment. I, therefore, resolved to support him in so far as the ultimate utilisation of Zobeir Pasha's services was concerned. On the other hand, there was manifestly a risk in allowing Zobeir Pasha and General Gordon to be at Khartoum together. Moreover, General Gordon's cautious companion, Colonel Stewart, entertained considerable doubts as to the advisability of employing Zobeir Pasha. I had great confidence in Colonel Stewart's judgment. I wished to give him the time, for which he asked, to form an opinion.

On February 19, therefore, I repeated to Lord Granville General Gordon's and Colonel Stewart's telegrams of the 18th, with the following remarks of my own:—

"As regards the choice of his (General Gordon's) successor, there is, as Colonel Stewart says in his telegram, no necessity to decide at once, but I believe Zobeir Pasha to be the only possible man. He undoubtedly possesses energy and ability, and has great local influence.

"As regards the Slave Trade, I discussed the matter with General Gordon when he was in Cairo, and he fully agreed with me in thinking that Zobeir Pasha's presence or absence would not affect the question in one way or the other. I am also convinced, from many things that have come to my notice, that General Gordon is quite right in thinking that Zobeir Pasha's residence in Egypt has considerably modified his character. He now understands what European power is, and it is much better to have to deal with a man of this sort than with a man like the Mahdi.

"I should be altogether opposed to having General Gordon and Zobeir Pasha at Khartoum together. As soon as General Gordon has arranged for the withdrawal of the garrison and the rest of the Egyptian element, he could leave Khartoum, and Zobeir Pasha might shortly afterwards start from Cairo. One of my chief reasons for allowing the interview between the two men to take place was that I wished to satisfy myself to some extent of the sentiments entertained by Zobeir Pasha towards General Gordon. I would not on any account run the risk of putting General Gordon in his power.

"If Zobeir Pasha is nominated, it will be very necessary to lay down in writing and in the plainest language what degree of support he may expect from Her Majesty's Government. I cannot recommend that he should be promised the moral support of Her Majesty's Government. In the first place, he would scarcely understand the sense of the phrase, and, moreover, I do not think he would attach much importance to any support which was not material. It is for Her Majesty's Government to judge what the effect of his appointment would be upon public opinion in England, but except for that, I can see no reason why Zobeir Pasha should not be proclaimed Ruler of the Soudan with the approbation of Her Majesty's Government. It should be distinctly explained to him in writing that he must rely solely upon his own resources to maintain his position. He might receive a moderate sum of money from the Egyptian Government to begin with. His communications with that Government might be conducted through Her Majesty's Representative in Cairo, as General Gordon suggests.

"With regard to the detailed conditions mentioned by General Gordon, I think they might form the subject of further consideration and discussion, both with General Gordon and with others in authority here. I am inclined to doubt whether such conditions would be of any use; they would probably not long be observed.

"In conclusion, I may add that I have no idea whether Zobeir Pasha would accept the position which it is proposed to offer him."

On February 22, Lord Granville replied: "Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the gravest objections exist to the appointment by their authority of a successor to General Gordon. The necessity does not, indeed, appear to have yet arisen of going beyond the suggestions contained in General Gordon's Memorandum of the 23rd ultimo,[1] by making a special provision for the government of the country.

"In any case, the public opinion of this country would not tolerate the appointment of Zobeir Pasha."

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 442.

Simultaneously with the receipt of this telegram, I received General Gordon's Memorandum written at Abu Hamed on February 8. This Memorandum, though in some respects at variance with the proposals contained in his telegram of the 18th, enabled me more fully to understand the general line of policy which he wished to advocate. I repeated to General Gordon Lord Granville's telegram of the 22nd, and at the same time I added the following remarks of my own: "The views expressed in your telegram of the 18th do not appear to me to harmonise with those contained in your letter of the 8th instant, which I received this morning, but that is of no consequence. The real difficulty is to find a man, or several men, who will take over the government of the country to the south of Wadi Halfa, especially the government of Khartoum itself. In view of the objections entertained in England against Zobeir, can you suggest any other names?"

I resolved to postpone any further communication to Lord Granville until I had received General Gordon's reply to my question. It came on February 26, and was as follows: "Telegram of the 23rd February received respecting Zobeir. That settles question for me. I cannot suggest any other. Mahdi's agents active in all directions. No chance of Mahdi's advance personally from Obeid. You must remember that when evacuation is carried out, Mahdi will come down here, and, by agents, will not let Egypt be quiet. Of course, my duty is evacuation, and the best I can for establishing a quiet government. The first I hope to accomplish. The second is a more difficult task, and concerns Egypt more than me. If Egypt is to be quiet, Mahdi must be smashed up. Mahdi is most unpopular, and with care and time could be smashed. Remember that once Khartoum belongs to Mahdi, the task will be far more difficult; yet you will, for safety of Egypt, execute it. If you decide on smashing Mahdi, then send up another £100,000, and send up 200 Indian troops to Wadi Halfa, and send officer up to Dongola under pretence to look out quarters for troops. Leave Suakin and Massowah alone. I repeat that evacuation is possible. but you will feel effect in Egypt, and will be forced to enter into a far more serious affair in order to guard Egypt. At present, it would be comparatively easy to destroy Mahdi."

I have now arrived at the moment which was the turning-point of General Gordon's mission. It will be well to pause in order that I may give a summary of the situation as it then stood.

On February 26, the date on which I received the above telegram from General Gordon, thirty-nine days had elapsed since he had left London, thirty-one days since he had left Cairo, and eight days since he had arrived at Khartoum. During that period, leaving aside points of detail, as to which his contradictions had been numerous, General Gordon had marked out for himself no less than five different lines of policy, some of which were wholly conflicting one with another, whilst others, without being absolutely irreconcilable, differed in respect to some of their most important features.

On January 18, he started from London with instructions which had been dictated by himself. His wish then was that he should be merely sent to "report upon the best means of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Soudan." He expressed his entire concurrence in the policy of evacuation. This was the first and original stage of General Gordon's opinions.

Before he arrived in Egypt on January 24, he had changed his views as to the nature of the functions he should fulfil. He no longer wished to be a mere reporter. He wished to be named Governor-General of the Soudan with full executive powers. He supplemented his original ideas by suggesting that the country should be handed over to "the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest." This was the second stage of General Gordon's opinions.

Fifteen days later (February 8), he wrote from Abu Hamed a Memorandum in which he advocated "evacuation but not abandonment." The Government of Egypt were "to maintain their position as a Suzerain Power, nominate the Governor-General and Moudirs, and act as a supreme Court of Appeal." This was the third stage of General Gordon's opinions.

Ten days later (February 18), General Gordon reverted to the principles of his Memorandum of the 8th, but with a notable difference. It was no longer the Egyptian, but the British Government which were to control the Soudan administration. The British Government were also to appoint a Governor-General who was to be furnished with a British commission, and who was to receive a British decoration. Zobeir Pasha was the man whom General Gordon wished the British Government to select. This was the fourth stage of General Gordon's opinions.

Eight days later (February 26), when General Gordon had learnt that the British Government were not prepared to approve of Zobeir Pasha being sent to the Soudan, he proposed that the Mahdi should be "smashed up," and that, to assist in this object, 200 British Indian troops should be sent to Wadi Halfa. This was the fifth stage of General Gordon's opinions.

In thirty-nine days, therefore, General Gordon had drifted by successive stages from a proposal that he should report on the affairs of the Soudan, to advocating the policy of "smashing up" the Mahdi. It would, he said, be "comparatively easy to destroy the Mahdi."

It is inconceivable that General Gordon should have thought that the Mahdi could be destroyed with any force which the Egyptian Government could place at his disposal. British or British-Indian troops would have to be employed. He must have known this. Accordingly, three days later he took another step in advance. He proposed (February 29) that British-Indian troops should be used to open up the Suakin-Berber road. This, he said, "will cause an immediate collapse of the revolt." About the same time (February 27), he issued a Proclamation in which he stated that he had advised the people to desist from rebellion, but, he added, "finding that my advice had no effect on some people, I have been compelled to use severe measures, so much so that British troops are now on their way to reach Khartoum."

Mr. Egmont Hake says,[1] "the statement that British troops were on their way to Khartoum is, of course, inexplicable. It was probably due to the fact that Gordon had heard that British troops were advancing along the Suakin-Berber route." This explanation is wholly insufficient. At this time, telegraphic communication between Khartoum and Cairo was open. Nothing could have been easier than for General Gordon to have asked me whether such rumours, supposing there to have been any, were true, and I should, of course, at once have replied in the negative. It is clear that General Gordon made the statement about British troops being on their way to Khartoum knowing it to be unfounded. He wished to exercise a moral effect upon the population. I will not attempt to discuss whether, under the circumstances in which General Gordon was placed, his statement was justifiable from a moral point of view.' Many a military commander before General Gordon has found it necessary to employ ruses of various descriptions. From the point of view of expediency, it would appear that General Gordon made a mistake. It was certain that, in a short time, the people would find out that no British troops were on their way to Khartoum. Thus, General Gordon would be discredited. Indeed, when eventually Lord Wolseley's expedition advanced, the news of the approach of a British force failed to obtain credence.

---

[1] *The Story of Chinese Gordon*, pp. 82 and 153.

It can be no matter for surprise that the British Government should have been bewildered by the rapid changes in General Gordon's opinions. And this bewilderment was mixed with some alarm, for their impulsive agent appeared to be hurrying them along a path which would almost certainly lead to British armed intervention in the Soudan. Now, the Government held that one of the main objects of their policy should be to avoid any such intervention. Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons on February 23, 1885, said: "When General Gordon left this country and when he arrived in Egypt, he declared it to be—and I have not the smallest doubt it was—a fixed portion of his policy, that no British force should be employed in aid of his mission." This statement is unquestionably correct.

The following letter from Lord Northbrook, dated February 29, contains such a clear description of the difficulties of the moment, that I give it in full:—

> What a queer fellow Gordon is and how rapidly he changes his opinions!
>
> I. Zobeir is to be sent to Cyprus before Gordon arrives in Egypt.

II. Zobeir is to rule at Khartoum.

I. The Mahdi is a good kind man, whom Gordon is to visit quietly and settle affairs with.

II. The Mahdi is to be Emir of Kordofan.

III. The Mahdi is to be smashed up.

I. The Suakin-Berber route is to be opened up, and the Hadendowa tribe is to be set upon by the other tribes.[1]

II. Suakin is to be left alone.[2]

Why should Zobeir be trusted? His antecedents are all against it. Why should he oppose the Mahdi? He is supposed to have had a main hand in the insurrection. Why should he protect Egypt? He knows her weakness, and is just as likely to be her worst enemy.[3] Why should he like us? Gordon and you must have very good reasons, but I hope you will let us know them. There is no disposition here to negative Zobeir, simply because his nomination would undoubtedly be extremely distasteful to every one who has paid any attention to the history of the Soudan, or cares about checking the Slave Trade. But, looked at with reference to the real interests of Egypt, the arguments and probabilities against seem to me greatly to preponderate.

The Mahdi must be "smashed up." This seems to be Gordon's view now. But he gives no reasons, and it is utterly contrary to our policy hitherto. Indeed, his telegram does not differ very much from Chérif Pasha's programme of keeping Khartoum, upon which you turned him out.

Things may be in such a condition that a change may be necessary, but I cannot say I feel that confidence in Gordon's opinions, which are often most hastily expressed and constantly changed, to induce me to think without further reasons being given, that we were all wrong in January last.

---

[1] This proposal was contained in an undated Memorandum sent to me by General Gordon which I received on February 4, 1884. See *Egypt*, No. 12 of 1884, p. 61.

[2] When General Gordon was in Cairo, he wished the whole of the garrison of Suakin to be withdrawn, except 150 men. I think that this question must have formed the subject of further discussion between General Gordon and Colonel Stewart after their arrival at Khartoum, for on March 4, Colonel Stewart wrote to me: "I trust the Government will not be so ill-advised as to send away the troops from Suakin; it would be in every way a very bad move, and very prejudicial to us."

[3] Lord Northbrook might have quoted General Gordon's own testimony in support of this view. When, early in December 1883, I favoured the idea that Zobeir Pasha should be sent to Suakin, General Gordon wrote: "Zobeir will manage to get taken prisoner and will head the revolt."—*Events, etc.*, p. 314.

> If the religious movement is really so serious that the Mahdi must be "smashed up" for the safety of Egypt, how is it to be done? For my part, I can only see one way, and that is to set Musulman against Musulman, and to try and induce the Turk to take the business up. Turk against Arab it will be, and a serious business too.
>
> Pray do not suppose that, because we hesitate to take very grave decisions involving a considerable change of policy without time to consider and without further motives upon which to form our judgment, that we have the least want of confidence in you. As to Gordon, I have great confidence in his wisdom in action—little in his steadiness in Council.
>
> We certainly have the most difficult job to tackle between us that any men ever had, and I am sure it requires great steadiness all round.

Before General Gordon had been long at Khartoum, his combative spirit completely got the better of him. As a soldier, he could not brook the idea of retiring before the Mahdi. Moreover, as a civilised European, he winced at the idea that a country, in which some germs of civilisation had been sown, should relapse into barbarism. On April 11, 1884, he telegraphed to me:[1] "Having visited the schools, workshops, etc., it is deplorable to think of their destruction by a feeble lot of stinking Dervishes." He wished, therefore, to "smash up" the Mahdi, and perhaps it was natural that he should have done so. But in taking up this attitude, which necessarily involved armed British interference in the country, he departed from the spirit of his instructions. He was sent to evacuate the Soudan. A subsidiary portion of his instructions—I look to the spirit of those instructions rather than to the strict letter—was that, if possible, he was to leave behind him a fairly good government, which would not constitute a standing menace to Egypt. It is difficult to understand how General Gordon could have made his proposal to wage war against the Mahdi with British troops tally with these instructions.

---

[1] I did not receive this message till March 26, 1890.

It was not until February 23, when I received General Gordon's Memorandum of February 8 written at Abu Hamed, that I fully understood his telegram of the 18th from Khartoum, in which he proposed to utilise Zobeir Pasha's services. I then set myself to work to consider what it was that General Gordon really wanted. I swept aside all the minor contradictions in his proposals. I did not consider that the suggestion about "smashing up" the Mahdi was worthy of serious discussion. It was obviously impracticable without employing British troops, a policy the adoption of which the British Government would certainly have rejected. It appeared to me, however, that at the bottom of all General Gordon's contradictions there was an underlying vein of common sense. He wished, in the terms of his Memorandum of February 8, to advocate a policy of "evacuation but not abandonment." The policy of setting up the local Sultans, which he had put forward at Cairo, was manifestly impossible of execution, not because it was faulty in principle, but because there were no local Sultans to set up. He wished, therefore, to carry out the same principle, but in a manner differing from that which had been originally proposed. One man, Zobeir Pasha, was to be set up, who was to govern the most important portions of the Soudan. He was to be a feudatory of the Egyptian Government. This was a serious departure from the policy of reporting, which had been adopted in London. It was not, however, a serious departure from, but rather a modification of the policy embodied in the instructions given to General Gordon at Cairo. Some two years later, Lord Northbrook wrote to me: "My own opinion of the reason of the failure is that, instead of doing as we wished, viz., withdrawing the garrison of Khartoum, Gordon, on his arrival, hankered after the *ignis fatuus* of arranging for a settled government of a country, which could not be settled excepting by a lengthened and possibly a permanent occupation in force." It may be that this view is right. But at the time it seemed to me that it would be a wise policy to establish a "buffer state" in the Soudan, which would hold much the same relation to Egypt as Afghanistan holds to British India. The policy was, I thought, at any rate worthy of a trial, and, so far as I could judge from General Gordon's utterances, he was of opinion that the difficulties in the way of its accomplishment, though great, were not altogether insurmountable.

It was with this view uppermost in my mind that, on February 28, I repeated to Lord Granville General Gordon's telegram of the 26th[1] and added the following remarks:—

"I will now submit to your Lordship my views upon the main points at issue, after having carefully considered the different proposals made by General Gordon. There are obviously many contradictions in those proposals; too much importance should not be attached to the details. But I venture to again recommend to the earnest attention of Her Majesty's Government the serious question of principle which General Gordon has raised.

"Two alternative courses may be adopted. One is to evacuate the Soudan entirely, and to make no attempt to establish any settled government there before leaving; the other is to make every effort of which the present circumstances admit to set up some settled form of government to replace the former Egyptian Administration.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 487.

"General Gordon is evidently in favour of the latter of these courses. I entirely agree with him. The attempt, it is true, may not be successful, but I am strongly of opinion that it should be made. From every point of view, whether political, military, or financial, it will be a most serious matter if complete anarchy is allowed to reign south of Wadi Halfa. And this anarchy will inevitably ensue on General Gordon's departure, unless some measures are adopted beforehand to prevent it.

"With regard to the wish of Her Majesty's Government not to go beyond General Gordon's plan, as stated in his Memorandum of the 23rd ultimo, I would remark that he appears to have intended merely to give a preliminary sketch of the general line of policy to be pursued. Moreover, in that Memorandum he makes a specific allusion to the difficulty of providing rulers for Khartoum, Dongola, and other places where there are no old families to recall to power.

"It is clear that Her Majesty's Government cannot afford moral or material support to General Gordon's successor as Ruler of the Soudan, but the question of whether or not he should be nominally appointed by the authority of Her Majesty's Government appears to me to be one of very slight practical importance.

"Whatever may be said to the contrary, Her Majesty's Government must in reality be responsible for any arrangements which are now devised for the Soudan, and I do not think it is possible to shake off that responsibility.

"If, however, Her Majesty's Government are unwilling to assume any responsibility in the matter, then I think they should give full liberty of action to General Gordon and the Khedive's Government to do what seems best to them.

"I have no doubt as to the most advisable course of action. Zobeir Pasha should be permitted to succeed General Gordon. He should receive a certain sum of money to begin with, and an annual subsidy of about £50,000 for the first five years, to depend upon his good behaviour. This amount would enable him to maintain a moderate-sized army, and the whole arrangement would be an economical one for the Egyptian Government.

"The main difficulty lies in the selection of the man. It is useless to send any one who has no local influence. There are certain obvious objections to Zobeir Pasha, but I think too great weight is attached to them, and I believe that General Gordon is quite right when he says that Zobeir Pasha is the only possible man. I can suggest none other, and Nubar Pasha is strongly in favour of him.

"It is for Her Majesty's Government to judge of the importance to be attached to public opinion in England, but I venture to think that any attempt to settle Egyptian questions by the light of English popular feeling is sure to be productive of harm, and in this, as in other cases, it would be preferable to follow the advice of the responsible authorities on the spot."

On March 1, Lord Granville replied: "I have received your telegram of the 28th ultimo, informing me of General Gordon's views with regard to the proposals which he made for placing Zobeir Pasha in power at Khartoum.

"Her Majesty's Government desire further information as to the urgency of any immediate appointment of a successor to General Gordon, who they trust will remain for some time longer at Khartoum.

"If it be found necessary to make an arrangement of this subject eventually, Her Majesty's Government will carefully weigh your opinions as to the proper person for the post.

"They are, at the same time, of opinion that if such an appointment is made, it might be advantageous that it should receive the confirmation of the Sultan." I repeated this telegram to General Gordon.

Lord Granville wrote me a private letter, on February 29, which shows the views entertained by the Government at the time this telegram was despatched. "Pray do not," he said, "doubt our full confidence in you, but as circumstances naturally sometimes oblige you to change the view you had taken when things were in a different state, we often desire to have your opinion before a final decision. We had a Cabinet, and although there would have been much reluctance if we had been obliged to answer at once categorically about Zobeir, yet we should, probably, have yielded to your, Gordon's and Nubar's opinion. If you persist in it, I am certain it will be carefully considered. The Cabinet were startled at what appeared to be a change of front as to withdrawal from the Soudan. I apprehend that your answer would be that you do not propose an Egyptian Government administering the Soudan with Egyptian troops scattered about the desert, that it is only proposed that an individual should be appointed with a large salary to govern the country as best he could, and in a friendly manner towards Egypt. But even this offers many considerations. As to the person, I do not doubt that Zobeir is the only man strong enough to cope with the Mahdi. But can you guarantee that the official income will be a sufficient bribe to prevent his embarking in his former lucrative pursuits, or even of his not going over to the Mahdi?"

It was obvious that I could give no guarantee of the sort required by Lord Granville. As has been already mentioned, the attitude of the British Government in respect to Egyptian affairs was often of an exclusively negative and hypercritical character. The objections to the adoption of any particular course were clearly seen. Those objections were allowed to prevail. But as no alternative policy was adopted, the Government became the sport of circumstances. On April 18, 1884, Lord Granville wrote to me: "The misfortune during the last two years has been that we hardly ever have had anything but bad alternatives to choose from. The objectors to whatever was decided were pretty sure to have the best of it."

In the interval between the receipt of General Gordon's telegram of February 26 [1] and that of Lord Granville's reply on March 1,[2] General Gordon sent me a large number of telegrams. It was difficult to understand from them what it was he really wanted. Moreover, the language in which they were couched led me to the conclusion that he was making a number of proposals on matters of general policy without sufficient reflection. On March 2, therefore, I telegraphed to him: "I am most anxious to help and support you in every way, but I find it very difficult to understand exactly what it is you want. I think your best plan will be to reconsider the whole question carefully, and then state to me in one telegram what it is you recommend, in order that I can, if necessary, obtain the instructions of Her Majesty's Government." I added some further observations drawing attention to the main points which required consideration.

At the same time (March 2), I sent the following telegram to Colonel Stewart: "Private. As regards my long telegram to Gordon, pray make him understand that my sole object is to help him to the best of my ability, but it adds immensely to my difficulties to receive constant and somewhat contradictory telegrams, apparently written on the spur of the moment, in respect to matters of policy. What I should like him to do is to consider the whole question carefully and deliberately, and then to let me know what he thinks and what he recommends. At present, with the best possible intentions, I can really do little to help him, for I cannot clearly understand what it is he wants."[1]

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 487.

[2] *Vide ante*, p. 497.

Prior to the despatch of this telegram to Colonel Stewart, I had, on February 29, sent the following private telegram to Lord Granville: "I have received a fresh batch of telegrams from Gordon. His statements and proposals are hopelessly bewildering and contradictory. I do not mean to say that I have lost confidence in Gordon. Such is not the case. But in dealing with his proposals it is often difficult to know what he means, and still more difficult to judge what is really worthy of attention, and what is more or less nonsense. It is really of no use my forwarding all he sends home for instructions, for the difficulty for you will be even greater than for me. I think, on the whole, you had better give me full authority to do the best I can. I fully understand the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and you can rely on my doing nothing contrary to it, but, of course, I can only do this if I feel sure I possess the entire confidence of Her Majesty's Government. I should, in any case, like an answer about Zobeir as a question of principle is involved." To this telegram Lord Granville replied on March 2: "I am not surprised at your private message. We have full confidence in you and give the full discretion you ask. When you have time, we like to know your reasons."

---

[1] On receiving this telegram, Colonel Stewart wrote to me (March 4): "I fully sympathise with you about the many and rather divergent telegrams you get. Gordon telegraphs directly an idea strikes him. There is no use in trying to stop it. Were I you, I should always wait for a few days before acting unless the subject matter is so evident that there can be no doubt about it."

Matters were so urgent that I was unable to follow Colonel Stewart's advice to the extent of "waiting for a few days before acting." But I rarely acted on any telegram of General Gordon's directly I received it. I generally found a batch of them waiting for me when I began my work in the morning. My practice was to put them on one side and wait till the afternoon, by which time more had generally arrived. I used then to compare the different telegrams, to try to extract from them what it was that General Gordon really wanted, and then to decide what could be done towards carrying out his wishes.

I received several telegrams from General Gordon in reply to my message of March 2. I need not give them in full. They were to the effect that he maintained the policy of eventually evacuating the Soudan, including Khartoum; that, in consequence of the evacuation, anarchy would ensue, about which, General Gordon said, "I would not trouble myself"; and that the immediate withdrawal of all the Egyptian employés was impossible. General Gordon dwelt strongly on the necessity of sending Zobeir Pasha to Khartoum at once. "The combination," he said, "at Khartoum of Zobeir and myself is an absolute necessity for success, and I beg you and Lord Granville to believe my certain conviction that there is not the slightest fear of our quarrelling, for Zobeir would know that the subsidy depended on my safety. To do any good we must be together, and that without delay. . . . Pray abandon fear of Zobeir's hurting me. His interests are bound up with mine. Believe me I am right, and do not delay. . . . Things are not serious, although they may become so if delay occurs in sending Zobeir. My weakness is that of being foreign and Christian and peaceful; and it is only by sending Zobeir that that prejudice can be removed. I wish you would question Stewart on any subject you like without hesitation and you can learn his views distinct from mine. This would please me."

General Gordon also urged that it was necessary to open up the road from Berber to Suakin. He desired that 200 British troops should be sent to Wadi Halfa. "It is not," he said, "the number, but the prestige which I need; I am sure the revolt will collapse if I can say that I have British troops at my back."

At the same time, I received the following telegram from Colonel Stewart, dated March 4: "The principal desire of General Gordon is to have Zobeir here as soon as possible. His reasons are: Zobeir is the only man with sufficient prestige to hold the country together, at any rate for a time, after the evacuation. Being a Pasha among the Shaggieh irregulars, he will be able to get at sources of information and action now closed to us. He will be opposed to the Mahdi. I agree with Gordon. It seems evident to me that it is impossible for us to leave this country without leaving some sort of established government which will last at any rate for a time, and Zobeir is the only man who can ensure that. Also, that we must withdraw the Sennar and other besieged garrisons, and here also Zobeir can greatly assist us. The principal objections to Zobeir are his evil reputation as a slave dealer and his enmity to General Gordon. As regards the first, it will have to be defended on the plea that no other course is open except British annexation or anarchy. As regards the second, if precautionary measures are taken, such as making the subsidy payable through General Gordon, I think Zobeir will see that his interests are in working with General Gordon.

"Of the secondary measures proposed by General

Gordon to assist the evacuation, they are: When the Berber-Suakin road is clear, to send a small force of Indian or British cavalry to Berber, and to send a small force of British cavalry to Wadi Halfa. These measures, showing that we had forces at our disposal, would greatly assist negotiations with rebels, and hasten evacuation. I assure you none are more anxious to leave this country than Gordon and myself, and none more heartily approve the Government policy of evacuation. Unless, however, Zobeir is sent here, I see little probability of this policy being carried out. Every day we remain, finds us more firm in the country, and causes us to incur responsibilities towards the people, which it is impossible for us to overlook."[1]

---

[1] Colonel Stewart's private letters give some further indication of his views at this time. On March 1, he wrote to me: "As for the future of this country, the choice of a ruler, it would seem to me, lies between Zobeir and the Mahdi. Politically and socially, I should much prefer the former. To have a religious ruler here would be a great disadvantage to us in Egypt, not to speak of the probable consequences in other parts of the Arab world. If once we establish Zobeir here, and gave him something to start upon, we might let matters slide, and act on the Darwinian principle of the 'survival of the fittest.' . . . It seems to me that the only people here who will suffer by the withdrawal of the Government are the rich Arab merchants and the Greeks. I cannot say that I have any sympathy with either class, and I should greatly grudge that any English money should be spent in supporting them. Let them make their own terms and get out of the mess as best they can. The villagers and nomad tribes have an organisation of their own, which is independent of any Government. They will probably fight and squabble amongst themselves, but that is their affair. Of the towns, such as Khartoum, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola, they are all only collections of mud-huts, which, if burnt one day, can be rebuilt the next. Of the lot, Khartoum is the best. . . . The country is only intended by nature for nomad tribes and a few scattered Arabs along the banks of the Nile. It annoys me greatly to see the blood and treasure wasted on it. . . . As regards Zobeir, I think you have no option in the matter. Unless he is sent up, I see no means of terminating the state of affairs here. . . . There is no one here we can appoint who would stand for a day; hence, I see no option but Zobeir with a small subsidy. I think by means of the subsidy you would ensure his fidelity. Of course, there is always a certain risk in the matter, but we can only do what is best. Every possible scheme has its advantages and its disadvantages. How far Gordon and Zobeir

Up to this time, I had pressed the British Government to allow Zobeir Pasha to succeed General Gordon at Khartoum, but I had opposed the idea of sending him there immediately. My reasons for making this reserve were twofold. In the first place, I feared that Zobeir Pasha's old grudge against General Gordon would endanger the latter's life. In the second place, I entertained greater confidence in the judgment of Colonel Stewart than in that of his chief. Up to March 4, Colonel Stewart hesitated as to the desirability of employing Zobeir Pasha. The telegrams which I have given above, led me, however, to reconsider the recommendations which I had so far made. It was clear that the situation at Khartoum was becoming very critical. The tribes between Berber and Khartoum were wavering. They were being driven by the force of circumstances into the arms of the Mahdi. It was evident that, if anything was to be done in the way of establishing an anti-Mahdist Government at Khartoum, no time was to be lost. General Gordon was pressing strongly for the immediate despatch of Zobeir Pasha, and argued—as I thought with great force—that, so far as his personal safety was concerned, Zobeir Pasha's interest would be in the direction of doing him no harm. Colonel Stewart also had come round to General Gordon's opinion. He now advocated, without reserve of any kind, the immediate employment of Zobeir Pasha. Judging, not only from the contents of his telegram, but also from what I knew of the character of the man, it seemed to me certain that Colonel Stewart had not changed his opinion merely in order to be agreeable to his chief, but that the

will be able to work together, time alone can say. I apprehend, however, Zobeir, like the rest of the world, knows what is to his own advantage."

change was due to a careful consideration of the facts of the situation at Khartoum. I determined, therefore, to modify my own recommendations to the British Government, and to support the proposal that Zobeir Pasha should be sent to Khartoum at once.

On March 4, I repeated to Lord Granville General Gordon's telegrams of the 2nd and 3rd and Colonel Stewart's telegram of the 4th. I added: "The general substance of General Gordon's telegram is that he presses strongly for Zobeir Pasha to be sent to Khartoum without delay. I have carefully reconsidered the whole question, and I am still of opinion that Zobeir Pasha should be allowed to succeed General Gordon. I do not think that anything would be gained by postponing a decision on this point; on the contrary, I should say that delay would be injurious.

"As regards the question of when Zobeir should be sent—in the face of the strong opinion expressed by General Gordon, I am not inclined to maintain my objection to his going at once to Khartoum. But, before giving a final opinion on this point, I should prefer to have another interview with Zobeir himself. It would be useless for me to do this until Her Majesty's Government has decided whether, apart from the question of the time of his departure, Zobeir is to be allowed to return to the Soudan at all. I await, therefore, an answer on this latter point before taking any further action."

At the same time (March 4), I sent the following private telegram to Lord Granville: "My official telegram of to-day gives the gist of some twenty telegrams from Gordon. I feel confident that I am stating his real opinion, and not a mere passing impression. Do not commit yourself to sending Zobeir at once until I have seen the man again. What I want to know is whether your objections to sending him at all are insuperable."

When I sent these telegrams, my intention was to see Zobeir Pasha, and, after hearing his language and observing his demeanour, to form a final judgment as to whether it would be desirable to send him to Khartoum at once. I should have told him that, if the withdrawal from the Soudan was conducted successfully, and especially if General Gordon and Colonel Stewart returned safely to Cairo, he would be named Governor-General of the Soudan, and that he would receive a subsidy of £100,000 a year from the Egyptian Government, so long as his behaviour was satisfactory; on the other hand, that if any harm befell General Gordon or Colonel Stewart, and in general, if at any subsequent period he adopted a hostile attitude towards Egypt, he would incur the displeasure of both the British and Egyptian Governments, and that should he fall into the hands of either, his life would possibly be forfeited. It was, however, useless for me to enter into any negotiations of this sort until I had received from the British Government a free hand to act in the matter according to the best of my judgment.

It will be observed that both General Gordon and Colonel Stewart in their telegrams of March 3 and 4 urged the desirability of opening up the Berber-Suakin road. Colonel Stewart also suggested that a force of British or Indian cavalry should be sent from Suakin to Berber. At that time, General Graham was at Suakin, and was about to advance against Osman Digna. There was some prospect that, when the latter had been defeated, Hussein Pasha Khalifa, who was then at Berber, might be able to open up the road to Suakin without further British military assistance. Moreover, so long as any prospect existed of sending Zobeir Pasha to

Khartoum, and thus settling the Soudan question by diplomacy, I was not prepared to incur the responsibility of recommending that a British force should be despatched into the interior of the Soudan. On March 4, therefore, I telegraphed to Lord Granville: "I cannot agree with the proposal mentioned in Colonel Stewart's telegram that a force of British or Indian cavalry should be sent through from Suakin to Berber."

On March 5, Lord Granville telegraphed to me as follows: "I have received your telegram of the 4th instant on the subject of the proposal that Zobeir Pasha should succeed General Gordon at Khartoum, and I have to inform you that Her Majesty's Government see no reason at present to change their impressions about Zobeir, which were formed on various grounds, amongst others on the Memoranda, dated the 23rd January, written by General Gordon and Colonel Stewart on board the *Tanjore.*[1] Unless these impressions could be removed, Her Majesty's Government could not take upon themselves the responsibility of sending Zobeir to Khartoum.

"Her Majesty's Government would be glad to learn how you reconcile your proposal to acquiesce in such an appointment with the prevention or discouragement of slave-hunting and Slave Trade, with the policy of complete evacuation, and with the security of Egypt.

"They would also wish to be informed as to the progress which has been made in extricating the garrisons, and the length of time likely to elapse before the whole or the greater part may be withdrawn.

"As Her Majesty's Government require details as to each garrison, your report should be a full one, and may be sent by mail.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 442.

"In your telegram now under reply, no allusion is made to the proposal that the local Chiefs should be consulted as to the future government of the country, and Her Majesty's Government desire to know whether that idea has been abandoned."

I remember the feeling akin to despair with which I received this telegram. It was clear that the Government did not realise the true nature of the situation at Khartoum. I was asked to reconcile the proposal that Zobeir Pasha should be employed, (1) with the prevention or discouragement of slave-hunting and the Slave Trade; (2) with the policy of complete evacuation; and (3) with the security of Egypt. The answers were obvious.

If the Soudan were abandoned, slave-hunting and the Slave Trade could not be prevented. This was clear from the first. The fact was an unpleasant one, but no object was to be gained by a failure to recognise its existence.

Again, it could scarcely be argued that to set up Zobeir Pasha as a subsidised and semi-independent ruler of the Soudan was inconsistent with the policy of evacuation. The policy, which both General Gordon and myself were at this moment advocating, was one of "evacuation but not abandonment,"—that is to say, not complete abandonment to anarchy.

As regards the security of Egypt, the choice lay between Zobeir Pasha and the Mahdi, and the opinion of the best-informed authorities on the spot was that the former was less dangerous than the latter.

Again, I was asked to furnish information "as to the progress which had been made in extricating the garrisons, and the length of time likely to elapse before the whole or the greater part might be withdrawn."

The Government must surely have known that no progress had been made in extricating the garrisons, and that if the remote garrisons in Sennar and the Equatorial provinces were to be withdrawn, it was impossible to state what length of time would elapse before the operation could be completed. One of the objects in recommending the employment of Zobeir Pasha was to facilitate the extrication of the garrisons by preventing the wavering tribes from joining the Mahdi.

But perhaps the most deplorable part of Lord Granville's telegram was that in which the British Government, at a time when every moment was precious, asked for a full report to be sent by mail as to the details of each garrison. These details had been already furnished to the Government three months previously in a despatch which fills five pages of a blue book.[1]

My position at this time was one of great difficulty. It was clear that the situation at Khartoum was very critical. Every telegram received from General Gordon and Colonel Stewart insisted more strongly than its precursor on the necessity of sending Zobeir Pasha at once to Khartoum. On the other hand, the British Government were evidently very averse to the employment of Zobeir Pasha. Moreover, General Gordon's frequent changes of opinion, and the number and tone of his telegrams, had not unnaturally engendered the belief that he had not sufficiently considered the nature of his proposals. In spite of the messages which had been sent to London, the Government evidently thought that General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were not in any immediate danger, and that time was available to consider leisurely the future course of action in the Soudan. After weighing the matter carefully, I came to the conclusion that the best course to adopt would be to make a further endeavour in the direction of utilising Zobeir Pasha's services. I was all the more disposed to adopt this course because just at this moment (March 7) I received Lord Granville's private letter of February 29,[1] from which I gathered that the Government were open to conviction on the Zobeir question.

---

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1884, p. 125.

It seemed to me that the best way to induce the Government to yield was to get General Gordon to send a carefully reasoned reply to the objections raised in Lord Granville's telegram of March 5. I resolved, therefore, to repeat that telegram to General Gordon. I added the following observations: "In view of the opinions entertained by Her Majesty's Government, it becomes your duty and mine to reconsider very carefully the two following points:—

"First, is it possible to choose any other man except Zobeir? Secondly, if it is not possible to do so, are the arguments in favour of Zobeir's appointment sufficient to outweigh the obvious disadvantages?

"As regards the first point, would it be possible to place Hussein Pasha Khalifa at Khartoum with a certain portion of territory northwards, and to divide the rest of the country amongst the heads of tribes? I do not recommend this course. I merely ask for your opinion on it.

"Further, will you reconsider the question of collecting the Chiefs at Khartoum, and coming to an agreement with them as to the future of the country?

"As regards the second question, the following points require consideration.

"First, how is the proposal to nominate and subsidise Zobeir to be reconciled with the policy of evacuation?

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 498.

"Secondly, how is it to be reconciled with the prevention or discouragement of slave-hunting or the Slave Trade?

"Thirdly, how is it to be reconciled with the security of Egypt? In dealing with this latter question, it is desirable to consider how far Zobeir can be trusted to remain friendly to Egypt. Might he not make common cause with the Mahdi, should he become powerful, and prove a source of danger, on his own account, rather than of assistance to Egypt? Many people think that he has instigated the revolt of the Mahdi. Have you any reasons to believe that he has done so?

"Having answered these questions, please reply fully to Lord Granville's question as to the prospects of extricating the garrisons, including Darfour."

My object in sending this telegram was to ask General Gordon a series of leading questions, which he might answer in a form calculated to produce an effect in London. I felt, however, that some further explanation was due to him, for he might reasonably cavil at questions being addressed to him which, so far as was possible, he had already answered several times. Simultaneously, therefore, with the despatch of my official telegram, I sent him the following private message: "Please understand, as regards my long telegram of to-day, that I could answer many of the questions myself, but I want to get your opinions and then see whether they agree with mine. You can regard the Zobeir question as still under consideration, but the Home Government does not like the proposal, and requires solid reasons to be given before they can accept it. Send me a careful and well-argued answer on the different points I raise."

On March 8, I received General Gordon's reply. It was as follows: "The sending of Zobeir means the extrication of the Cairo employés from Khartoum, and the garrisons from Sennar and Kassala. I can see no possible way to do so except through him who, being a native of the country, can rally the well-affected around him, as they know he will make his home here. I do not think that the giving a subsidy to Zobeir for some two years would be in contradiction to the policy of entire evacuation. It would be nothing more than giving him a lump sum in two instalments under the conditions I have already written. As for slave-holding, even had we held the Soudan, we could never have interfered with it. I have already said that the Treaty of 1877 was an impossible one; therefore, on that head, Zobeir's appointment would make no difference whatever. As for slave-hunting, the evacuation of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatorial provinces would entirely prevent it. Should Zobeir attempt, after his two years' subsidy was paid him, to take those districts, we could put pressure on him at Suakin, which will remain in our hands. I feel sure that Zobeir will be so occupied with the Soudan proper, and with consolidating his position, that he will not have time to devote to those provinces. As for the security of Egypt, Zobeir's stay in Cairo has taught him our power, and he would never dream of doing anything against Egypt. He would rather seek its closest alliance, for he is a great trader. As to progress made in extrication of garrisons, all I have done is to send down from Khartoum all the sick men, women, and children of those killed in Kordofan. Sennar, I heard to-day, is quite safe and quiet. Kassala will hold out without difficulty after Graham's victory, but the road there is blocked, as also is the road to Sennar. It is quite impossible to get the roads open to Kassala and Sennar, or to send down the white troops, unless Zobeir comes up. He will change the whole state of affairs. As for the Equatorial and Bahr-el-Ghazal provinces, they are all right, but I cannot evacuate them till the Nile rises, in two months. Dongola and Berber are quiet; but I fear for the road between Berber and Khartoum, where the friends of the Mahdi are very active. A body of rebels on the Blue Nile are blockading a force of 1000 men, which have, however, plenty of food; till the Nile rises, I cannot relieve them. Darfour, so far as I can understand, is all right, and the restored Sultan should now be working up the tribes to acknowledge him. It is impossible to find any other man but Zobeir for governing Khartoum. No one has his power. Hussein Pasha Khalifa has only power at Dongola and Berber. If you do not send Zobeir, you have no chance of getting the garrisons away; this is a heavy argument in favour of sending him. There is no possibility of dividing the country between Zobeir and other Chiefs; none of the latter could stand for a day against the Mahdi's agents, and Hussein Pasha Khalifa would also fall. The Chiefs will not collect here, for the loyal are defending their lands against the disloyal. There is not the least chance of Zobeir making common cause with the Mahdi. Zobeir here would be far more powerful than the Mahdi, and he would make short work of the Mahdi. The Mahdi's power is that of a Pope, Zobeir's will be that of a Sultan. They could never combine. Zobeir is fifty times the Mahdi's match. He is also of good family, well known and fitted to be Sultan; the Mahdi, in all these respects, is the exact opposite, besides being a fanatic. I daresay Zobeir, who hates the tribes, did stir up the fires of revolt, in hopes that he would be sent to quell it. It is the irony of fate that he will get his wish if he is sent up."

At the same time, I received some further telegrams from General Gordon, which showed that the danger of communication between Berber and Khartoum being cut off was daily becoming more imminent, although, General Gordon added, "for Khartoum itself, there is not any fear."

On March 9, I repeated to Lord Granville General Gordon's long telegram of the 8th, adding the following remarks:—

"I think that the policy of sending Zobeir to Khartoum and giving him a subsidy is in harmony with the policy of evacuation. It is in principle the same policy as that adopted by the Government of India towards Afghanistan and the tribes on the north-west frontier. I have always contemplated making some arrangements for the future government of the Soudan, as will be seen from my despatch of December 22, 1883, in which I said that it would be 'necessary to send an English officer of high authority to Khartoum with full powers to withdraw all garrisons in the Soudan, and make the best arrangements possible for the future government of the country.'

"As regards slavery, it may certainly receive a stimulus from the abandonment of the Soudan by Egypt, but the despatch of Zobeir Pasha to Khartoum will not affect the question in one way or the other. No middle course is possible so far as the Soudan is concerned. We must either virtually annex the country, which is out of the question, or else we must accept the inevitable consequences of the policy of abandonment.

"Your Lordship will see what General Gordon says about the question of the security of Egypt. I believe that Zobeir may be made a bulwark against the approach of the Mahdi. Of course, there is a risk that he will constitute a danger to Egypt, but this risk is, I think, a small one, and it is in any case preferable to incur it rather than to face the certain disadvantages of withdrawing without making any provision for the future government of the country, which would thus be sure to fall under the power of the Mahdi.

"I venture to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of settling this question without delay. General Gordon's telegrams have latterly caused me some uneasiness. He evidently thinks that there is a considerable danger of his being hemmed in and blockaded by the rebels at Khartoum, and he appears to contemplate the despatch of British troops to extricate him. Moreover, so far as I can judge, General Gordon exercises little or no influence outside Khartoum, and, although he was at first hailed as a deliverer, his influence is sure to decline as time goes on."

An incident now occurred which practically destroyed all hopes of utilising Zobeir Pasha's services. Up to this moment, nothing definite was known to the public about the proposal to send Zobeir Pasha to Khartoum. Mr. Power was employed by the *Times* as its special correspondent at Khartoum. On March 8 or 9, Mr. Moberly Bell, who was *Times* correspondent in Egypt, communicated to me a telegram from Mr. Power for transmission to the *Times*, from which it appeared that General Gordon had given to him all the information which was contained in his telegrams to me. I subsequently received a letter from Colonel Stewart, dated March 8, which informed me of what had taken place in connection with this subject. "The telegram," Colonel Stewart wrote, "shown you by Bell this morning has, no doubt, surprised you. Gordon also sent you a telegram giving in his resignation if his views were not carried out. Yesterday evening, he got very irritated with me because I did not at once accede to his request to send you a telegram about Zobeir and the propriety of sending him up with a British force to Berber. I said that you had already told us the chief difficulty was not at Cairo, but at London, etc.

"I did not refuse to write the telegram, I merely asked for a little time to think. G. got very impatient and finally left the table. Seeing that he was annoyed, I got up and wrote the telegram as he desired. On returning, I found him with the *Times* correspondent. The result was the telegram you have been shown. We had a discussion on the subject, but it was of no avail. He then telegraphed his resignation to you, but this I fortunately succeeded in getting put into cipher. The affair is very annoying, but I think the Ministry at home ought to let him have his wish and give him Zobeir."

General Gordon wrote in his Journal: "Baring pitched into me for indiscretion in asking *openly* for Zobeir, which I did on *purpose*, in order to save Her Majesty's Government the odium of such a step."[1] As regards the indiscretion, there can be no doubt whatever. It was not only that the publication of General Gordon's views raised a storm of opposition in England to Zobeir Pasha's appointment, but also that the difficulties of negotiating with Zobeir Pasha were greatly increased. Instead of my being able to send for him and point out to him that he had hitherto been under a cloud, but that now he had an opportunity of retrieving his reputation, he was placed in a position in which it would have appeared possible to him to dictate his own terms.

---

[1] *Journal*, September 19, 1884, vol. i. p. 57. I remember sending a telegram urging on General Gordon the desirability of reticence in his communications to the press, but I cannot lay my hands on it.

Indeed, he received advice to act in this manner from the numerous persons in Cairo who were eager to seek any and every opportunity for showing hostility to England.

As regards the effect in England, Mr. Sturge, the Chairman of the Anti-Slavery Society, wrote, on March 18, to Lord Granville that he had been instructed by a full Committee of the Society to state that they were "unanimous in the feeling that countenance in any shape of such an individual (*i.e.* Zobeir Pasha) by the British Government would be a degradation for England and a scandal to Europe. . . . As yet, however, the Committee are unable to believe that Her Majesty's Government will thus stultify that anti-slavery policy which has so long been the high distinction of England, or that they will thus discharge a trust which they have undertaken on behalf of the British people and of Europe." The action of the Anti-Slavery Society was injudicious. It can scarcely be doubted that their opposition, together with the fact that there was every indication of the matter being taken up as a party question in England, greatly contributed to the rejection of the views put forward by General Gordon, Colonel Stewart, and myself.

Before dealing with the reply which Lord Granville sent to my telegram of March 9, I must describe the further correspondence which took place between General Gordon and myself on March 9, 10, and 11.

On the 9th, General Gordon telegraphed to me: "I shall await your decision (*i.e.* the decision about Zobeir Pasha); if wire is cut, I shall consider your silence is consent to my propositions, and shall hold on to Khartoum and await Zobeir and British diversion at Berber." I had still some hope of being permitted to utilise Zobeir Pasha, but, in view of the fact that telegraphic communication with Khartoum might at any moment be interrupted, I did not think it was either just or desirable to leave General Gordon under the impression that the British Government had any intention of sending an expedition to Berber, when I knew that they had no such intention. I, therefore, replied at once: "So far as I know, there is no intention on the part of the Government to send an English force to Berber."

On March 10 and 11, I received a large number of telegrams from General Gordon. I need not give them in full. They were to the general effect that the Sheikh-el-Obeid was undecided whether to join the Mahdi or not,[1] that there was considerable risk of communication between Berber and Khartoum being interrupted, but that Khartoum itself was not in any danger, and that the utility of Zobeir Pasha had been greatly diminished by the delay in settling the question of his employment, "which had forced the loyal to join the enemy." "If," General Gordon telegraphed, "you mean to make the proposed diversion to Berber (of British troops), and to accept my proposal as to Zobeir, to install him in the Soudan and evacuate, then it is worth while to hold on to Khartoum.

"If, on the other hand, you determine on neither of these steps, then I can see no use in holding on to Khartoum, for it is impossible for me to help the other garrisons, and I shall only be sacrificing the whole of the troops and employés here.

"In this latter case, your instructions to me had better be that I should evacuate Khartoum, and, with all the employés and troops, remove the seat of government to Berber. You would understand that such a step would mean the sacrificing of all outlying places except Berber and Dongola.

---

[1] The Sheikh-el-Obeid occupied a position of importance, as his tribal influence extended over the population lying between Khartoum and Berber. Colonel Stewart, in a letter to me, described him as "a very holy man, but a decided trimmer."

"You must give a prompt reply to this, as even the retreat to Berber may not be in my power in a few days; and even if carried out at once, the retreat will be of extreme difficulty.

"I should have to leave large stores and nine steamers, which cannot go down. Eventually, some question would arise at Berber and Dongola, and I may utterly fail in getting the Cairo employés to Berber.

"If I attempt it, I could be responsible only for the attempt to do so."

In another telegram, General Gordon said: "If the immediate evacuation of Khartoum is determined upon, irrespective of outlying towns, I would propose to send down all the Cairo employés and white troops with Colonel Stewart to Berber, where he would await your orders. I would also ask Her Majesty's Government to accept the resignation of my commission, and I would take all steamers and stores up to the Equatorial and Bahr-el-Ghazal Provinces, and consider those provinces as under the King of the Belgians.

"You would be able to retire all Cairo employés and white troops with Stewart from Berber to Dongola, and thence to Wadi Halfa.

"If you, therefore, determine on the immediate evacuation of Khartoum, this is my idea. If you object, tell me.

"It is the only solution that I can see if the immediate evacuation of Khartoum, irrespective of the outlying towns, is determined upon."[1]

Lord Granville's reply to my telegram of March 9 was despatched to me on the 11th. It was to the following effect: "Her Majesty's Government have carefully considered your telegrams of the 9th instant with regard to the future government of Khartoum and the Soudan, but they do not consider that the arguments against the employment of Zobeir Pasha have been satisfactorily answered. They are prepared to agree to any other Mohammedan assistance, as well as to the supply of any reasonable sum of money which General Gordon may consider necessary in order to carry out successfully the objects of his mission.

---

[1] Some of the telegrams, which Gordon sent me at this moment, did not reach me till many days later, owing to the frequent interruptions of telegraphic communication.

"Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to send troops to Berber. They understand from your telegrams that General Gordon and yourself are of opinion that the withdrawal of the garrisons will take a considerable time, and that the chief difficulty arises from the uncertainty felt by the inhabitants of the Soudan with regard to the future government of the country. While attaching great importance to an early evacuation, Her Majesty's Government have no desire to force General Gordon's hand prematurely, and they propose, therefore, to extend his appointment for any reasonable period which may be necessary to enable him to carry out the objects of the mission with which he has been intrusted. You will communicate with General Gordon in the sense of this despatch."

Immediately afterwards (March 12), I received the following telegram from Lord Granville: "Her Majesty's Government desire to learn whether General Gordon's proposal as to his eventual successor refers to the whole of the Soudan, and, if not, to what districts of it. They would also be glad to receive information as to whether his proposed jurisdiction would embrace points from which Slave Trade or slave-hunting could be carried on."

I repeated Lord Granville's telegrams to General Gordon, instructing him at the same time to hold on to Khartoum until I could communicate further with the British Government. I also told him "on no account to proceed to the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatorial provinces."

I do not think that General Gordon ever received this message. Nevertheless, I regret that I sent it. I have already discussed this matter partially in dealing with the question of the prohibition placed on his action in respect to retiring southwards.[1] I may now add that, in view of the danger of telegraphic communication being interrupted, it would have been better for me, instead of telling General Gordon to hold on to Khartoum, to have taken upon myself the responsibility of directing him to retire at once to Berber, if he thought fit to do so. Also, it would have been better for me to have accepted the conclusion that the British Government were determined not to employ Zobeir Pasha. If it could have been announced, before the tribes between Berber and Khartoum rose, that Zobeir Pasha was to be installed as Governor-General of the Soudan with a force of black troops at his disposal to maintain order, it is possible that the Sheikh-el-Obeid and his followers would never have joined the Mahdi. But the favourable moment for influencing them in this direction had been allowed to pass by. At the time, however, I thought from the tone of Lord Granville's telegrams of the 11th and 12th of March that the employment of Zobeir Pasha was still an open question. I, therefore, repeated to him a summary of General Gordon's most recent telegrams. I also replied at length to the questions addressed to me, and at the same time I sent to him the following private telegram: "If you eventually decide to send Zobeir, please keep it, if possible, secret, till I have dealt with him here. I am told that he will not go unless Gordon comes away, as, if Gordon came to any harm, he thinks he would be accused of causing it. The publicity, which Gordon gave to this matter, is most unfortunate. Newspaper correspondents are interviewing Zobeir, and some people here are urging him to make his own terms, as we cannot get on without him. All this will make him difficult to deal with."

---

[1] *Vide ante*, pp. 465-467.

Lord Granville replied immediately (March 13):

"I have received your telegram of the 13th instant on the subject of General Gordon's suggestions with regard to the appointment of Zobeir Pasha as Governor of Khartoum and the despatch of British troops to Berber. Her Majesty's Government are unable to accept these proposals. If General Gordon is of opinion that the prospect of his early departure diminishes the chance of his accomplishing his task, and that by staying at Khartoum himself for any length of time which he may judge necessary he would be able to establish a settled government at that place, he is at liberty to remain there. In the event of his being unable to carry out this suggestion, he should evacuate Khartoum and save that garrison by conducting it himself to Berber without delay.

"Her Majesty's Government trust that General Gordon will not resign his commission. He should act according to his judgment as to the best course to pursue with regard to the steam-vessels and stores."[1]

---

[1] On March 14, Lord Granville wrote to me privately: "We have had two Cabinets (at which Gladstone was not present); there was a difference of opinion as to the abstract advantages or disadvantages of Zobeir, but the unanimous opinion of the commoners in the Cabinet was that no Liberal or Conservative Government could appoint Zobeir. And the difficulty of sending troops to Berber is very great, and may entail unlimited difficulties upon us."

On March 14, I replied to Lord Granville's telegram of the 13th: "The instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram of the 13th are likely to lead to such very serious consequences that, even if the line were not still interrupted, I should hesitate to repeat them to General Gordon until I have again asked your Lordship whether the question has been fully considered in all its bearings. When it is said that General Gordon may stay at Khartoum for any length of time which he may judge necessary to establish a settled government, is it meant that he may stay an indefinite time, and that he will be succeeded by some other Governor-General working, as before, under orders from Cairo? This is a possible policy, but it is, of course, a reversal of abandonment. It must lead either to the Egyptian Government endeavouring to govern the Soudan unaided (and this they cannot do, and should not be allowed to attempt), or it will lead to the appointment of a succession of English Governors-General, and probably of other English officials. This must ultimately involve the English Government becoming virtually responsible for the government of the Soudan. I trust Her Majesty's Government will not for a moment think of adopting such a policy. If, on the other hand, it is merely intended to prolong General Gordon's period of office for a few months, then I can assure your Lordship that delay will not facilitate his task. On the contrary, the difficulty of establishing a settled government will, I believe, increase rather than diminish with time. The alternative, which General Gordon will probably adopt, of evacuating Khartoum at once and retiring on Berber, is open to very great objections, and will be most difficult to execute. It involves the certainty of sacrificing the garrisons of Sennar, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and Gondokoro. The garrisons of Kassala and the neighbourhood may perhaps be brought down to Massowah, but it is at present impossible to speak with certainty on this point. I do not think that the retreat could be carried out without great personal risk to Gordon and Stewart. The ultimate effect will be that Khartoum must fall to the Mahdi, whose powers will be thus immensely increased, and the policy of creating a bulwark between Egypt and the Mahdi, which I cannot but think is the only wise course to follow, will have to be finally abandoned. I would beg your Lordship not to attach undue importance to some of the minor contradictions in General Gordon's telegrams. His main contentions appear to me to be perfectly clear and reasonable. They are, first, that the two questions of withdrawing the garrisons and of arranging for the future government of the country cannot be separated. Secondly, that it is most undesirable, even if it be possible, for him to withdraw without leaving some permanent man to take his place. I regret that no one but Zobeir can be found to succeed Gordon, and although I believe the opinions held in England as to the effect of Zobeir's appointment are based on an incorrect appreciation of the facts, I am nevertheless fully aware of the great difficulties which would have to be encountered in England, if the appointment is made. But the real question is, not whether the appointment of Zobeir is objectionable, but whether any other practical and less objectionable alternative can be suggested. I can suggest none. I trust your Lordship will not think that, after the repeated telegrams I have received, I am unduly pressing for the Zobeir solution. I should not again urge it, if I could see any other less objectionable way out of the present very difficult position.

On the other hand, I should not be doing my duty if I did not lay before Her Majesty's Government the grave dangers which will result from, and the objections which may be urged against the alternative set forth in your Lordship's telegram under reply."

Simultaneously with the despatch of this telegram, news arrived from Berber which left no further doubt that the Sheikh-el-Obeid had declared in favour of the Mahdi, and that the tribes between Berber and Shendy were in revolt.

On March 16, Lord Granville telegraphed to me: "I have received your telegram of the 14th instant, in which you discuss the question of the future government of the Soudan; and after full consideration of the weighty arguments put forward therein, Her Majesty's Government adhere to the instructions contained in my telegram of the 13th. While the objections of Her Majesty's Government to Zobeir are unaltered, the prospect of good results attending his appointment seem to be diminished. The instructions to General Gordon to remain in the Soudan only apply to the period of time which is necessary for relieving the garrisons throughout the country, and for affording a prospect of a settled government. If General Gordon agrees with you that the difficulty of establishing a settled government will increase rather than diminish with time, there can be no advantage in his remaining, and he should, as soon as is practicable, take steps for the evacuation of Khartoum in accordance with the instructions contained in my telegram of the 13th instant. On evacuating Khartoum, he should exercise his discretion as to what is to be done with the steamers and stores there."

It was evidently useless to continue the correspondence. The British Government were determined not to send Zobeir Pasha, and, moreover, now that there was no longer any doubt that the tribes between Berber and Khartoum had joined the Mahdi, the favourable moment for sending him was passed. On March 17, therefore, I sent a long telegram to General Gordon, informing him of the result of the correspondence which had taken place between Lord Granville and myself. I added: "I think you must now regard the idea of sending Zobeir as finally abandoned, and that you must act as well as you can up to the instructions contained in Lord Granville's telegrams." I do not think that General Gordon ever received this telegram.

On March 17, I wrote a despatch to Lord Granville in which I stated that I did not propose to continue the correspondence about the employment of Zobeir Pasha. I added: "I regret the decision at which Her Majesty's Government has arrived, and I look forward with considerable apprehension to the results of the policy which it has now been decided to adopt. But your Lordship may rely on my using my best endeavours to carry out the instructions which I have received."

On March 28, Lord Granville wrote to me a despatch stating at length the reasons which had induced the Government to reject the proposal that Zobeir Pasha should be employed. The despatch alluded to the condemnatory terms which, on various occasions, General Gordon had employed in speaking of Zobeir Pasha. It was pointed out, with perfect accuracy, that both Colonel Stewart and myself had, in the course of the correspondence, greatly modified our original opinions. After giving a summary of the correspondence which had taken place, Lord Granville went on to say:

"If reliance could safely have been placed upon Zobeir to serve loyally with General Gordon, to act in a friendly manner towards Egypt, and to abstain from encouraging the Slave Trade, the course proposed was undoubtedly the best which could have been taken under the circumstances; but upon this most vital point General Gordon's assurances failed to convince Her Majesty's Government. They felt the strongest desire to comply with his wishes, but they were bound, at the same time, to exercise their own deliberate judgment upon a proposal the adoption of which might produce such serious consequences. They could not satisfy themselves of the probability that the establishment of Zobeir's authority would be a security to Egypt; on the contrary, his antecedents, and character and disposition, led them to the conclusion that it would probably constitute a serious danger to Egypt. There seemed to Her Majesty's Government to be considerable risk that Zobeir might join with the Mahdi, or if he fought and destroyed him, that he would then turn against Egypt. The existence of an outbreak of Musulman fanaticism was undoubted; but the Mahdi had not shown any personal qualifications which threatened to convert it into a military power and organisation. To have let loose in the Soudan a Musulman of undoubted ability and ambition, possessed of great military skill, and with a grievance against the Egyptian Government, appeared to Her Majesty's Government to be so perilous a course that they were unable to accept the responsibility of adopting it. They were unable to share General Gordon's confidence that Zobeir's blood feud with him involved no serious danger, and they felt that the opinion originally expressed by General Gordon, by the Council at Cairo, and by yourself, was more likely to be correct than the subsequent one. The chivalrous character of General Gordon appeared to be likely to lead him into the generous error of trusting too much to the loyalty of a man whose interests and feelings were hostile to him.

"Besides these considerations affecting the interests of Egypt and the safety of General Gordon, Her Majesty's Government had further to consider how far it was probable that his authority might be exercised to renew the slave-hunting raids for which he was notorious. The temptation to embark in such lucrative transactions would be great to himself, and there would be the additional risk that having to rely on the support of his former friends and dependents, the slave-hunters, he would be obliged to purchase their support by connivance at their nefarious practices. Her Majesty's Government understand the reasons which compelled General Gordon to announce that the property in slaves in the Soudan would be recognised; but this is a very different thing from using the authority of Great Britain to establish a notorious slave-hunter as ruler over that country. General Gordon, indeed, proposed that the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatorial provinces should be excluded from Zobeir's rule, but England would have possessed no power to secure his adherence to such a stipulation.

"These were the considerations which led Her Majesty's Government to address to you the instructions of the 13th instant."

On April 14, I replied as follows to this despatch: "I trust your Lordship will permit me to say that, in my opinion, the despatch under reply contains a very fair statement of a question which I think was beset with more difficulties than any which, in the course of my experience, I have had to consider. If the arguments used in that despatch stood alone, they would, I think, be unanswerable; but the difficulty which I experienced in treating this question was to suggest some alternative which would be preferable to that which I recommended. If eventually any better solution is found, I shall be the first to admit that I was in error in proposing to send Zobeir Pasha to the Soudan."

Were the British Government right in their decision not to employ Zobeir Pasha? It is, of course, impossible to give more than a conjectural answer to this question. Reviewing the matter now, after a lapse of many years, I am still of opinion that Zobeir Pasha should have been employed.[1] I believe that if, when General Gordon sent his first telegram on the subject from Khartoum on February 18, the Government had stated that they had no insuperable objections to the employment of Zobeir Pasha, the course of events in the Soudan might possibly have been changed. When once General Gordon was supported by Colonel Stewart, I should have yielded to his pressure that Zobeir Pasha should have been despatched to Khartoum at once, to which I was at first reluctant to consent. He could have left Cairo before the end of February, or at all events very early in March. It is not improbable that the announcement of his departure would have prevented the tribes round Khartoum, who were then wavering, from joining the Mahdi. But the favourable moment was very fleeting. Regarded by the light of after events, it is evident that the discussion of this subject was prolonged for a fortnight longer than was necessary. Even if the Government had yielded when the correspondence closed in the middle of March, no good would have been done. The propitious moment had been allowed to pass by.

---

[1] There can be no question as to the extent of the influence which Zobeir Pasha then exercised in the Soudan, more especially over the tribes between Berber and Khartoum. When I visited the Soudan thirteen years later, I found that even the poorest classes, however ignorant of other matters, were well acquainted with Zobeir Pasha's name, and asked eagerly for news of his welfare. In the spring of 1900, he was allowed to return to the Soudan.

Whilst, however, my personal opinion is that the British Government made a mistake in not giving General Gordon and myself a free hand in this matter, the error was one which I do not think that any impartial critic, even supposing he adopts our views, will be disposed to condemn severely. The objections which Lord Granville urged against the employment of Zobeir Pasha were, in truth, very forcible. Lord Northbrook, for whose calm judgment and independence of character I entertained the highest respect, wrote to me two years later: "I believe that to have sent Zobeir would have been a gambler's cast, and that the probabilities were in favour of his action against Gordon, and of his raising a power in the Soudan, which would have been a greater danger to Egypt than there is now. I can say most positively that my own conclusion, with every disposition to agree with you, was very deliberately formed against Zobeir, and I am still of the same opinion." Without doubt, the risks involved in employing Zobeir Pasha were considerable. My own opinion was, and still is, that the advantages which might have accrued from employing him were of a nature to counterbalance those risks. Moreover, my main objection to the policy of the Government was that, as so often occurred in Egyptian affairs, the British Government confined themselves to criticism on what was proposed without being able to suggest any alternative and less objectionable plan. I repeat, however, that all this is conjectural. No one can positively decide whether the British Government on the one hand, or General Gordon, Colonel Stewart, and myself on the other hand, showed the greater amount of foresight. All that can be said is that disastrous circumstances ensued after the refusal to employ Zobeir Pasha, but any one who asserts that those circumstances were due to the non-employment of Zobeir Pasha falls into the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy.

One further point remains to be examined. Were the British Government really averse to the employment of Zobeir Pasha, or did they merely act under the pressure of British public opinion? I will endeavour to answer this question.

On March 21, that is to say, after the final decision of the Government had been given, Lord Granville wrote to me privately: "There was much difference of opinion as to the abstract merits of sending Zobeir, but there was really none as to the vote of the House of Commons. Three of the members of the Commons in the Cabinet who were in favour of Zobeir,[1] were of opinion that, not only would the House of Commons pass a censure, but that they would do it so immediately as to stop the possibility of his going. I should not have minded the vote, if I had been sure the policy was right, but I see nothing in its favour, excepting the great authority of you, Gordon, and Nubar, and two of you have supplied very strong arguments the other way."

---

[1] Mr. Morley (*Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 159) writes: "The matter was considered at two meetings of the Cabinet, but the Prime Minister was prevented by his physician from attending. A difference of opinion showed itself upon the despatch of Zobeir; viewed as an abstract question, three of the Commons members inclined to favour it, but on the practical question, the Commons members were unanimous that no Government from either side of the House could venture to sanction Zobeir. Mr. Gladstone had become a strong convert to the plan of sending Zobeir. . . . One of the Ministers went to see him in his bed, and they conversed for two hours. The Minister, on his return, reported with some ironic amusement that Mr. Gladstone considered it very likely that they could not bring Parliament to swallow Zobeir, but believed that he himself could. Whether his confidence in this was right or wrong, he was unable to turn his Cabinet. The Queen telegraphed her agreement with the Prime Minister. But this made no difference. 'On Saturday 15,' Mr. Gladstone notes, 'it seemed as if by my casting vote Zobeir was to be sent to Gordon. But on Sunday —— and —— receded from their ground, and I gave way.'"

This, without doubt, represented the real state of the case. Some members of the Government would have had the courage to face the storm of opposition if they had been convinced that it was wise to employ Zobeir Pasha. But they entertained an honest conviction that it was unwise to employ him. Others were inclined to accept the proposal of General Gordon and myself, but they would naturally hesitate to insist on the adoption of this view in a doubtful case against the adverse opinions of their colleagues. The opposition, which was certain to be encountered in Parliament and in the press, contributed to turn the scale. Whether that opposition was in reality so serious as it was represented to be is a point on which, having had no personal experience of parliamentary proceedings, I cannot express any valuable opinion. But I cannot help thinking that there is a good deal of truth in the following remarks of the *Pall Mall Gazette*: "The opposition, getting wind of Gordon's application for Zobeir, and displaying their usual anxiety to damage the Government, *coûte que coûte*, began to raise a hue and cry against Zobeir. Yet, it was pre-eminently a case in which a strong Government could and ought to have supported their agent. Public opinion, no doubt uninformed, and unaware of the arguments which were used by General Gordon and Sir Evelyn Baring, was outraged by the very suggestion of Zobeir's appointment. But, if the public had been placed in possession of the facts laid before the Government, the appointment of Zobeir would have been approved, nor would it have excited more serious opposition than the Slave-holding Proclamation."

To an outsider, indeed, the case did not seem hopeless from a parliamentary point of view. I do not say that the arguments in favour of employing Zobeir Pasha were by any means conclusive, but they were certainly strong. However high party spirit may run, there must surely always be a certain number of moderate men on both sides of the House of Commons, who would pause before, in a very serious matter of this sort with which they were imperfectly acquainted, they would deliberately reject the opinion of the best qualified authorities on the spot. From the point of view of an appeal to authority, the case was a strong one. General Gordon's name carried immense weight with the public. Both Colonel Stewart and myself were less known, and our opinions would have certainly carried far less weight with the general public than those of General Gordon. Nevertheless, we might possibly have exercised some influence over the views of those who may have felt, but were reluctant to express a certain want of confidence in General Gordon owing to the eccentricities to which allusion has been made in these pages. General Gordon's character and habits of thought differed widely from both Colonel Stewart's and mine, but, as it appears to me, the fact that these differences existed served rather to strengthen the case in so far as it depended on an appeal to authority.

Mr. Gladstone, speaking in the House of Commons on February 23, 1885, said: "It is well known, that if, when the recommendation to send Zobeir was made, we had complied with it, an address from this House to the Crown would, before forty-eight hours were over, have paralysed our action; and, although it is perfectly true that the decision arrived at was the judgment of the Cabinet, it was also no less the judgment of Parliament and of the people." Without doubt, there is much truth in this argument. But there was this notable difference between the Government on the one side, and Parliament and the people on the other side. The former were well informed of the facts and arguments; the latter were, in a great degree, ignorant of them. I believe that the final catastrophe at Khartoum might possibly have been averted if Zobeir Pasha had been employed. If I am right in this conjecture, the main responsibility must naturally devolve on Mr. Gladstone's Government. But it must in fairness be added that the responsibility must be shared by the British Parliament and by the people generally, notably by the Anti-Slavery Society. The Ministers who objected to the employment of Zobeir Pasha were perhaps in some degree wanting in imagination and elasticity of mind. They could not transport themselves in spirit from Westminster to Khartoum and Cairo. They do not appear to have shown the versatility necessary to deal with the rapidly shifting scenes in the drama which was being unfolded in the Soudan. The arguments which they applied against General Gordon and myself appear to me to be rather those of debaters trained in the art of dialectics than of statesmen whose reason and imagination enable them to grasp in an instant the true situation of affairs in a distant country widely differing from their own. Nevertheless, even supposing my appreciation of the facts to be correct, it must be admitted that in a matter of such difficulty an error of judgment is, to say the least, pardonable.

# CHAPTER XXVI

## THE PROPOSED DASH TO BERBER

March 16–April 21, 1884

Sir Gerald Graham proposes to move on Sinkat—Lord Granville approves—The proposed movement on Wadi Halfa—Proposal to send a British expedition to Berber—It is rejected—The order to move on Sinkat is cancelled—Remarks on this decision—Proposal to despatch a force to Wadi Halfa—General Gordon recommends the employment of a Turkish force—The Government reject the proposal—Necessity of preparing for a Relief Expedition.

The decision not to employ Zobeir Pasha, coupled with the rising of the tribes between Khartoum and Berber, completely altered the aspect of affairs in the Soudan.

From that moment it became certain that, without external military aid, the Soudan must fall under the domination of the Mahdi. No such aid was available, yet without it any attempt to establish an anti-Mahdist Government at Khartoum was merely, to use Lord Northbrook's phrase, to follow a will-o'-the wisp.

This, however, did not constitute the only change in the situation. Communication with Khartoum was cut off. It became clear that the question of employing British troops might before long present itself for solution under different aspects from those which had heretofore existed. General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were surrounded by hostile tribes. It might become necessary to consider whether an expedition should be sent, not to re-establish order in the Soudan, or to relieve the beleaguered Egyptian garrisons, but to bring away the officers who had been sent by the British Government to Khartoum.

It was obviously desirable that the necessity for sending any expedition to Khartoum should be avoided. The best chance of avoiding it lay in opening up the road from Suakin to Berber at once, and thus facilitating General Gordon's retreat before the Mahdists could gather in force to oppose it. It was futile to rely any longer on diplomacy, on political concessions, or on individual influence to execute the aims of British policy in the Soudan. Diplomatists and politicians had had their say. Whether their efforts had been skilfully or unskilfully directed, was now immaterial. The political concessions made by General Gordon immediately after his arrival at Khartoum merely produced a temporary effect. His influence, although considerable on those with whom he was brought into personal contact, was manifestly confined to the walls of Khartoum. It had proved powerless to prevent the neighbouring tribes from throwing in their lot with the Mahdi. It was becoming daily more and more clear that it was only by the use of force that anything effective could be done to help General Gordon.

The course of events in the Eastern Soudan up to the middle of March 1884 has been already described.[1] Osman Digna's forces had been defeated by Sir Gerald Graham, first at El Teb on February 29, and again at Tamai on March 13. There was at one time some hope that, as a result of the latter victory, the road from Suakin to Berber would be opened without further military operations of a serious nature. It soon became apparent, however, that the effect of the victories at El Teb and

---

[1] *Vide* Chapter XXI.

Tamai had not been so great as was anticipated. The Mahdists were, indeed, discouraged, but they thought that the British troops could do no more, and that they would leave the country.

It would be necessary, therefore, to follow up the victories, at all events to the extent of making a demonstration towards Berber. On March 15, Sir Gerald Graham telegraphed to Lord Hartington that both Admiral Hewett and himself were of opinion that "an advance to Sinkat would now have a great effect, and ratify the late victories." A copy of this telegram was sent to me from Suakin. I decided to support Sir Gerald Graham's recommendation. On March 16, I telegraphed to Lord Granville: "With reference to Graham's message to the War Secretary recommending an advance on Sinkat, so far as I can judge of the situation from here, I should say it would be a wise measure. It will facilitate Chermside's negotiations with the tribes.[1] Chermside agrees in this view. It has now become of the utmost importance not only to open the Berber-Suakin route, but to come to terms with the tribes between Berber and Khartoum. If we fail in the latter point, the question will very likely arise of sending an expeditionary force to Khartoum to bring away Gordon. I do not think that he is in any immediate danger. He has provisions for six months."

On the following day (March 16), Lord Granville replied: "Graham's movement on Sinkat has been approved, but we cannot authorise the advance of any troops in the direction of Berber until we are informed of the military conditions, and are satisfied that it is necessary for Gordon's safety, and confined to that purpose. Our present information is that it would not be safe to send a small body of cavalry as proposed, and that it would be impossible to send a large force."

---

[1] Major (subsequently Sir Herbert) Chermside, R.E., was attached to Sir Gerald Graham's staff with the object of assisting in negotiations with the tribes.

No further communication on this subject of any importance passed until March 21, on which day Lord Granville telegraphed to me that the British Government "would deprecate the despatch of an expedition against Osman Digna, with whom they would be disposed to recommend, if possible, treating on the basis of his submission, and rendering himself answerable for the safety of the Berber road and the protection of traders and other travellers." The details of the instructions to be given to Sir Gerald Graham were left to my discretion. I, therefore, telegraphed to the latter (March 21) the substance of the instructions received from Lord Granville, and added: "A wide discretion must be left to you, acting on the best local advice obtainable, as to the best method of dealing with the tribes. . . . You must judge whether it is necessary to send an expedition against Osman Digna, or whether it is possible to treat with him on the basis of submission and becoming answerable for the peace of the Berber road and the protection of traders and others."

I reported to Lord Granville the nature of the instructions which I had sent to Sir Gerald Graham, and added: "It appears to me undesirable to debar General Graham from attacking Osman Digna, if he thinks it necessary to do so in order to open up the road to Berber."

On March 22, Sir Gerald Graham replied to my telegram in the sense which I had anticipated. "It would be useless," he said, "to enter into communication with Osman Digna." I repeated this telegram to Lord Granville, and added that I was of opinion that Sir Gerald Graham "should be allowed to attack Osman Digna as he proposed."

On March 23, Lord Granville replied: "Her Majesty's Government are averse to further military operations being undertaken without any definite object; but if General Graham considers that the security of the Berber road will be thereby ensured, he is authorised to advance to Tamanib as proposed." I repeated this to Sir Gerald Graham, and in reply received the following message from Admiral Hewett: "In Graham's opinion and mine the security of the Berber road cannot be attained so long as Osman Digna remains in arms. The first object of the advance on Tamanib is, therefore, to disperse him. No further fighting is anticipated."

It will be seen from this correspondence that, whilst my opinion was veering round to the necessity of employing force to help General Gordon, the British Government, on the other hand, were daily becoming more reluctant to sanction the use of force. The truth was that, whereas the Government had but a few weeks before been sharply criticised for their delay in proceeding to the relief of Tokar, they were now being attacked for having caused the useless slaughter of a number of Dervishes. They were unwilling to yield to the pressure in the direction of vigorous action, which was now being applied from Cairo and Suakin. At the same time, they wished to do something to help General Gordon. On March 22, therefore, Lord Granville telegraphed to ask my opinion on the following points: first, whether it would be desirable to "despatch a portion of the Egyptian army to garrison Wadi Halfa in order to lend moral support to General Gordon at Khartoum"; secondly, whether some British officers "with some knowledge of Arabic and experience in dealing with natives" might not advantageously be sent to Berber, "there to await instructions from General Gordon."

I consulted Sir Frederick Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Colonel Watson on these proposals. Our joint opinion was that the despatch of a handful of fellaheen troops to Wadi Halfa was a half measure which would be of little use. I, therefore, telegraphed to Lord Granville in this sense. There was more to be said in favour of sending some officers to Berber, but it was questionable whether they would be able to get there. Major Kitchener and Major Rundle were, however, directed to proceed to Berber. By the time they got to Assouan, it became clear that it would be imprudent to allow them to proceed any farther. Their original orders were, therefore, cancelled, and it was fortunate that this was done, for, had they proceeded to Berber, they would certainly have been made prisoners.

The more I thought over the whole matter, the more did it seem to me, first, that it was essential not only to open up the Suakin-Berber road, but also to clear the road from Berber to Khartoum; and secondly, that this could not be accomplished without the despatch of a British force to Berber. I discussed with Sir Frederick Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood the question of whether it would be possible to send a British force from Suakin to Berber. They were both of opinion that the operation was possible, although it was attended with risk, and although the health of the troops would suffer from the climate. On March 24, therefore, I telegraphed to Lord Granville: "It appears to me that, under present circumstances, General Gordon will not be able to carry out your Lordship's instructions, although those instructions involve the abandonment of the Sennar garrison on the Blue Nile, and the garrisons of Bahr-el-Ghazal and Gondokoro on the White Nile. The question now is how to get General Gordon and Colonel Stewart away from Khartoum. In considering this question, it should be remembered that they will not willingly come back without bringing with them the garrison of Khartoum and the Government officials. I believe that the success gained by General Graham in the neighbourhood of Suakin will result in the opening of the road to Berber, but I should not think that any action he can take at or near Suakin would exert much influence over the tribes between Berber and Khartoum. Unless any unforeseen circumstance should occur to change the situation, only two solutions appear to be possible. The first is to trust General Gordon's being able to maintain himself at Khartoum till the autumn, when, by reason of the greater quantity of water, it would be less difficult to conduct operations on the Suakin-Berber road than it is at present. This he might perhaps be able to do, but it of course involves running a great risk. The only other plan is to send a portion of General Graham's army to Berber with instructions to open up communication with Khartoum. There would be very great difficulty in getting to Berber, but if the road were once open, it might be done by sending small detachments at a time. General Gordon is evidently expecting help from Suakin, and he has ordered messengers to be sent along the road from Berber to ascertain whether any English force is advancing. Under present circumstances, I think that an effort should be made to help General Gordon from Suakin, if it is at all a possible military operation. General Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood, whilst admitting the very great risk to the health of the troops, besides the extraordinary military risks, are of opinion that the undertaking is possible. They think that General Graham should be further consulted. We all consider that, however difficult the operations from Suakin may be, they are more practicable than any operations from Korosko and along the Nile. If anything is to be done, no time should be lost, as each week increases the difficulty as regards climate."

On March 25, Lord Granville replied: "Having regard to the dangers of the climate of the Soudan at this time of the year, as well as the extraordinary risk from a military point of view, Her Majesty's Government do not think it justifiable to send a British expedition to Berber, and they wish you to communicate this decision to General Gordon, in order that he may adopt measures in accordance therewith. Her Majesty's Government desire to leave full discretion to General Gordon to remain at Khartoum, if he thinks it necessary, or to retire by the southern or any other route which might be found available."

On the following day (March 26), I received a further telegram from Lord Granville, directing me to send the following instructions to Sir Gerald Graham: "The Government have no intention of sending British troops to Berber. The operations in which you are now engaged must be limited to the pacification of the district around Suakin, and restoring communication with Berber, if possible by other means and influence of friendly tribes. Reports of the effect of heat on the troops strengthen the desire of Government that your operations should be brought to a speedy conclusion, and preparations made for the immediate embarkation of the bulk of your force. Report when you can dispense with the services of regiments from India."

I confess that when I received these two telegrams I found it difficult to preserve the "diplomatic calm," which formed the subject of General Gordon's sarcasms.[1] It was not so much that I minded the decision that no expedition should be sent to Berber, in so far as that decision was based upon military grounds. The military question was undoubtedly difficult of solution. There was a difference of opinion amongst the military authorities as to the practicability of opening the road to Berber. It could, therefore, be no matter for surprise that the Government should lean preferentially to the side of those who deprecated immediate action. The tone of the telegrams, however, grated upon me. The question which I had propounded to Lord Granville was how to get General Gordon and Colonel Stewart away from Khartoum. The march of events had been rapid, and it was obvious that at this moment the relief of General Gordon and Colonel Stewart was the most important point at issue. On March 25, I telegraphed to Lord Granville that Hussein Pasha Khalifa, who commanded at Berber, had reported that Khartoum was surrounded, and that the rebels were receiving reinforcements. The only answer I got was that the British Government left full discretion to General Gordon either to remain where he was or to retire by any route which might be found available. The Government, therefore, begged the question. They did not appear to realise the situation. They shut their eyes to the probability that before long no route would be available by which to retreat from Khartoum.

I, therefore, telegraphed to Lord Granville on March 26: "I cannot say whether it will be possible for me to communicate your Lordship's message to Gordon, but in any case I cannot reconcile myself to making the attempt to forward such a message without again addressing your Lordship. Let me earnestly beg Her Majesty's Government to place themselves in the position of Gordon and Stewart. They have been sent on a most difficult and dangerous mission by the English Government. Their proposal to send Zobeir, which, if it had been acted on some weeks ago, would certainly have entirely altered the situation, was rejected. The consequences which they foresaw have ensued. If they receive the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram of the 25th, they cannot but understand them as meaning that they and all with them are to be abandoned and to receive no help from the British Government. Coetlogon, who is here, assures me that so long as the rebels hold both banks of the river above the sixth cataract, it will be quite impossible for boats to pass. He does not believe that Gordon can cut his way through by land. He ridicules the idea of retreating with the garrison to the Equator, and we may be sure that Gordon and Stewart will not come away alone. As a matter of personal opinion, I do not believe in the impossibility of helping Gordon, even during the summer, if Indian troops are employed, and money is not spared. But if it be decided to make no attempt to afford present help, then I would urge that Gordon be told to try and maintain his position during the summer, and that then, if he is still beleaguered, an expedition will be sent as early as possible in the autumn to relieve him. This would, at all events, give him some hope, and the mere announcement of the intention of the Government would go a long way to ensure his safety by keeping loyal tribes who may be still wavering. No one can regret more than I do the necessity of sending British or Indian troops to the Soudan, but, having sent Gordon to Khartoum, it appears to me that it is our bounden duty, both as a matter of humanity and policy, not to abandon him."

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 477, note.

On March 28, Lord Granville replied: "We cannot accede to the proposals in your telegram. We have given it our most serious consideration, and, with the greatest wish to assist General Gordon, we do not see how we can alter our instructions of the 25th. Communicate them as soon as possible to General Gordon. We are not prepared to add to them until we hear what is General Gordon's actual condition and prospects as to security, and also, if possible, his plans of proceeding and his desires under present circumstances."[1]

It was evidently useless to continue the correspondence any further. I endeavoured to communicate to General Gordon the views of the British Government, as explained in Lord Granville's telegrams of the 25th and 28th of March, but I do not think that he ever received my message.

On March 27, Sir Gerald Graham telegraphed from Suakin: "I consider that my active operations are now completed and that I can at once dispense with the services of the regiments which came from India." On March 29, he was informed by the War Office that the Sinkat expedition was not to be undertaken, and that the British troops were to leave Suakin as soon as they were relieved by

---

[1] On March 29, Lord Granville wrote to me privately: "You shot a heavy cannon-ball,—your last protest as to our instructions to Gordon. Although your proposals were a complete reversal of our policy, we quite understood your feelings. We could not agree to pledge ourselves to a promise to Gordon to send a military expedition to Khartoum in the autumn. We hope that the victories of Graham may have corrected the bad effects of Baker's defeat. The military authorities assure us that, unless the garrison rebels against Gordon, the Arabs cannot take Khartoum. He is known to have six months' provisions. The only incident, as affecting the original views with which Gordon set out, and upon which we consented to send him, was the restriction upon Zobeir joining him, the objections to which were chiefly furnished by you and him."

Egyptian troops from Cairo. Shortly afterwards, the greater portion of the British garrison of Suakin was withdrawn.

Were the British Government right or wrong in refusing to send a portion of Sir Gerald Graham's force from Suakin to Berber? As in the case of the proposed employment of Zobeir Pasha, it is impossible to give more than a conjectural answer to this question. If it be admitted that the operation was practicable from a military point of view, there can scarcely be any doubt that the Government made a serious mistake. It appeared probable at the time that the decision not to send a small expeditionary force to Berber in the spring of 1884 would lead to the despatch of a larger force at a later period, and this, in fact, is what actually happened. The arguments based on the alleged necessity of obtaining "a better knowledge of General Gordon's actual position, his resources and his requirements," appeared to me at the time valueless, and I regard them in the same light on reading the correspondence over again after a lapse of many years. But it cannot on that account be stated positively that the decision of the Government was unwise. The question was wholly military. Was the operation practicable or not? On this point, the military authorities were not all of one mind. Sir Frederick Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood, whilst acknowledging the risks and the objections on the score of climate, thought that the operation should be undertaken. I believe that I am correct in stating that the military authorities at Suakin were less favourably disposed to undertaking the expedition than those at Cairo. I have always understood that it was not only the objections as regards the effect of the climate on the health of the British troops, but also the difficulties of providing transport sufficient even for a small force, which rendered them averse to the expedition. It is possible that they erred on the side of caution, but if they did so they can quote the high authority of Colonel Stewart to justify the advice which they gave. In the last letter which he wrote to me from Khartoum, dated March 11, Colonel Stewart said: "Notwithstanding our telegrams, I really fail to see how you can at this season of the year send an expedition from Suakin to Berber. The road is bad enough in the winter, but how any soldiers, but particularly English soldiers, could get along it in summer, I cannot conceive. I cannot picture to myself the English soldier getting over that awful plain between Obok and Berber. Also, from the time Ariab is left, there is no water. Of all animals in the world, I think the English soldier the least suited for the effort. Turks, Indians, etc., might do it, but it would be tough work." General Gordon also recognised the difficulty of employing British troops during the summer. The following entry occurs in his Journal, dated September 18, 1884: "One cannot help seeing that it is quite impossible to keep British troops after January. . . . I certainly will, with all my heart and soul, do my best, if any of Her Majesty's forces come up here, or to Berber, to send them down before January." My personal opinion at the time was that a very lightly equipped force of from 1000 to 1500 men might have been sent on camels from Suakin to Berber, and that, in spite of the risks and difficulties, the attempt should have been made. I remain of the same opinion still. On the other hand, it must be admitted that, in view of the conflicting nature of the military opinions laid before them, the Government had some fairly good grounds for rejecting the advice tendered by

Sir Frederick Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and myself. However this may be, it is certain that from the moment the proposal to make a dash to Berber with a small force was rejected as being impracticable, the despatch of a larger expedition at a later period became an almost unavoidable necessity. Some while was, however, yet to elapse before the Government fully realised the facts of the situation.

On April 8, Lord Granville telegraphed to me: "General Gordon has several times suggested a movement on Wadi Halfa which might support him by threatening an advance on Dongola; and under present circumstances at Berber, this might be found advantageous." I was instructed to consult Sir Frederick Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood with regard to this proposal. This matter had been already fully considered. On receipt of Lord Granville's telegram, however, a further consultation took place between Nubar Pasha, Sir Frederick Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and myself. General Stephenson thought the "step was open to great objections on account of the climate during the summer months, and he also considered it unwise to leave a detachment at so great a distance from its base." "On the whole," I telegraphed to Lord Granville on April 10, "we are disposed to think that the objections to undertaking the movement outweigh the benefits likely to accrue from it. Those benefits are of a very doubtful nature."

I am inclined to regret that I expressed an opinion adverse to this proposal, but my regret is solely based on the feeling that, situated as General Gordon then was, any suggestion emanating from him, especially if he reiterated it, should have been acted on if it was possible of execution. I did not believe at the time, and I do not believe now, that the despatch of a small body of men to Korosko or Wadi Halfa would have affected the position of General Gordon at Khartoum. When, at a later period, a British force was at Dongola, and was preparing to march on Khartoum, General Gordon wrote (November 8, 1884): "It is curious what a very little effect all our immense preparations at Dongola, etcetera, have had on the course of events; one may say that they have not had up to the present time the least."

On April 9, I received about thirty telegrams, which had been delayed in transmission, from General Gordon. They brought news from Khartoum up to April 1. In one of them he said: "I wish I could convey to you my impressions of the truly trumpery nature of this revolt, which 500 determined men could put down. Be assured that, for the present, and for two months, we are as safe here as at Cairo. I break my head over our impotence, and the more so when I feel that, once the Soudan taken, you may expect such a crop of troubles in all Moslem states. The only worry I have is that you will dawdle away your time, and do nothing till too late. If you would only put your pride in your pocket and get by good pay 3000 Turkish infantry and 1000 Turkish cavalry, the affair, including the crushing of the Mahdi, would be accomplished in four months."

General Gordon attached great importance to this proposal. He constantly alluded to the subject in his Journal. "If," he said, "the Soudan is given back to Egypt, in a couple of years we would have another Mahdi; therefore, our choice lies between Zobeir and the Turks. Now, the time has gone by when Zobeir, almost alone, would suffice. . . . Therefore, give the country to the Turks. If I was Lord Wolseley, *I would make* Her Majesty's

Government send the Turks here. . . . The Turks are the best solution, though most expensive. *They would keep the Soudan;* give them two millions." "The more I think of it, the more the Turk solution appears Hobson's choice. . . . I get out of all my troubles if the Turks come, for I shunt them on the Turks, and so do you." The Soudan "should be handed over to the Sultan with a subsidy." "The only possible solution is the Sultan, let the subsidy be what it may." The reasons why General Gordon made this proposal may be gathered from his telegrams and his Journal.

In the first place, he thought any solution was better than allowing the country to fall into the hands of the Mahdi. "To give up countries," he said, "which are to some extent civilised, which, if properly governed, are quiet and orderly, to the Turks or to Zobeir, and to allow the Slave Trade to flourish again in tenfold intensity, is not a very high *rôle*, but *quoi faire?* We have not the men to govern these lands, we cannot afford the money; consequently, I advise what I have said. . . . It would be nobler to keep the Soudan, but is too much to expect our taxpayers to agree to." His whole energy, therefore, was devoted, not so much to evacuating the Soudan as to "smashing up" the Mahdi. In two undated telegrams, which were received in Cairo on September 18 and 20, 1884, respectively, he said: "It would be the best course to negotiate with the Porte for the despatch of Turkish troops. . . . It is impossible to leave Khartoum without a regular government established by some Power. . . . Perhaps the British Government will be displeased with the advice which I have given. The people of the Soudan are also displeased with me on account of my fighting against them, and on account of their not attaining their object in following the Mahdi. I wish for negotiations with the Sublime Porte, so that the necessary assistance may be quickly sent here, so as to render it possible to extinguish the flame of this false Mahdi before it becomes difficult."

In the second place, General Gordon was greatly irritated with the Soudanese for continuing the revolt. On April 12, 1884, he telegraphed to me: "I wonder you do not give the Soudan to the Sultan with a subsidy of £150,000 a year. He would finish the rebellion in three months, including the Mahdi. After the way these people have rejected my terms, I would be inclined to let the Turkish harrow go over them. The Sultan would need only 3000 men."[1]

These extracts are sufficient to show that General Gordon underrated the serious nature of the revolt with which he had to deal; it was by no means a "trumpery revolt which 500 men could put down." On the contrary, from the local point of view it was a revolt of the most serious description, for the suppression of which a far larger force than that indicated by General Gordon would have been required. On the other hand, he overrated the consequences, which would ensue in Egypt and elsewhere, if the Mahdist movement were crowned with local success. He spoke of the Mahdi receiving "lots of letters from Cairo, Stamboul, and India." "What," he asked, "is to prevent the Mahdi's adherents gaining Mecca, where there are not 2000 men? Once at Mecca, we may look out for squalls in Turkey, etcetera." He spoke of the necessity of eventually "smashing up" the Mahdi if "peace were to be retained in Egypt." If the Mahdi took Khartoum he felt sure that "a rising would occur in Egypt." We now know that these fears were exaggerated. The Mahdi obtained supreme power in the Soudan, but the effect of the rebellion was entirely local. It did not cause any trouble in other Mohammedan countries. Even at that time, it was clear that, if the Mahdists attempted the invasion of Egypt, their onward march would be arrested when once they came in contact with British troops.[1]

---

[1] I did not receive this telegram till March 26, 1890.

The reply of the British Government to General Gordon's proposal was contained in a despatch addressed to Mr. Egerton by Lord Granville on May 1: "The employment of Turkish troops in the Soudan," Lord Granville wrote, "would be contrary to the views advocated by General Gordon on former occasions. I need not remind you that in his Proclamations issued at Berber and Khartoum, he declared that he had averted the despatch of troops by the Sultan, and had come in person to prevent further bloodshed. Moreover, such a course would involve a reversal of the original policy of Her Majesty's Government, which was to detach the Soudan from Egypt, and restore to its inhabitants their former independence. . . . It is clear . . . that General Gordon's object in asking for these troops is to effect the withdrawal of the Soudan garrisons by military expeditions, and to bring about the collapse of the Mahdi. . . . With respect to General Gordon's request for Turkish troops with a view to offensive operations, General Gordon cannot too clearly understand that these operations cannot receive the sanction of Her Majesty's

---

[1] There can be no doubt that the alleged necessity of "smashing the Mahdi" on the ground that his success in the Soudan would be productive of serious results elsewhere, exercised a powerful influence over British public opinion throughout the whole of this period. Nevertheless, the best authorities on Eastern politics were at the time well aware that these fears were groundless, or at all events much exaggerated. Thus, on March 21, 1884, Sir Alfred Lyall wrote to Mr. Henry Reeve: "The Mahdi's fortunes do not interest India. The talk in some of the papers about the necessity of smashing him in order to avert the risk of some general Mohammedan uprising is futile and imaginative."—*Memoirs of Henry Reeve*, vol. ii. p. 329.

Government, and that they are beyond the scope of his mission."

So long as General Gordon confined himself to making proposals which could, even with a certain amount of straining, be made to harmonise with the general line of policy which he had been sent to carry out, a strong moral obligation rested upon the British Government to adopt his suggestions. The proposal to hand over the Soudan to the Sultan and to utilise Turkish troops in order to crush the revolt of the Mahdi was, however, opposed both to the spirit of his instructions, and to the views which he had himself persistently advocated up to that time. From whatever point of view the question be regarded, the Government were, therefore, fully justified in exercising their own discretion as to whether so complete a change of policy as that recommended by General Gordon was either possible or desirable. It cannot be doubted that the Government exercised a wise discretion in declining to follow General Gordon's advice in this particular connection. I doubt whether the execution of the policy recommended by General Gordon was possible. I have no doubt that, supposing it to have been possible, its execution was undesirable.

I base my doubts as to the possibility of the execution of the policy on the difficulties of negotiating with the Sultan on a matter of this sort, difficulties which were exemplified when there was a question of sending Turkish troops to suppress the Arábi revolt; on the special difficulty of moving the Porte to speedy and vigorous action, such as would have been required to ensure success in this particular instance; on the impecuniosity of the Ottoman Treasury; on the impossibility of throwing the charge of the expedition on the Egyptian Treasury; and on the gravity of the rebellion, the suppression of which would have required a far larger force than General Gordon estimated.

I base my opinion on the undesirability of adopting the policy recommended by General Gordon on the fact that the occupation of the Soudan by Turkish troops would assuredly have brought in its train a continuance, and not improbably an aggravation of the misgovernment which was the primary cause of the rebellion; and on the further fact that a Turkish occupation would not have afforded any final settlement of the Soudan question. As a choice of evils, indeed, it was preferable in the interests of England, of Egypt, of the civilised world in general and of the people of the Soudan, that the Mahdi should obtain possession of the country rather than that it should be handed over to the Sultan. Dervish rule in the Soudan was, without doubt, an evil, but even at that time it could be foreseen that the evil would in all probability only be temporary. A Turkish occupation would have been an evil of a more permanent nature. It was almost irreconcilable with the idea of future Egyptian reconquest. It would have caused endless political and financial complications. It is well, therefore, that the British Government declined to follow General Gordon's suggestions in this connection.

In the meanwhile, the situation at Khartoum was daily becoming more critical. On March 29, I received a telegram from General Gordon, dated the 17th, giving an account of an action which had been fought in the neighbourhood of Khartoum on the 16th, and in which, owing apparently to the treachery of two Pashas, who were subsequently executed, the Egyptian troops suffered a severe defeat. Shortly afterwards, a panic occurred at Berber. Every one who could get away left the place. Hussein Pasha Khalifa, who was in command at Berber, telegraphed: "The Government having abandoned us, we can only trust in God."

General Gordon had not received all the telegrams which had been sent to him from Cairo. But he was aware that the Government had negatived his proposal to employ Zobeir Pasha, and that there was no intention of sending a relief expedition from Suakin to Berber. He was greatly irritated at the rejection of these proposals. On April 7, he sent me a telegram which, Mr. Egmont Hake observes, "at once became historical." It was as follows: "As far as I can understand, the situation is this: you state your intention of not sending any relief up here or to Berber, and you refuse me Zobeir. I consider myself free to act according to circumstances. I shall hold out here as long as I can, and if I can suppress the rebellion I shall do so. If I cannot, I shall retire to the Equator, and leave you the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Sennar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola, with the certainty that you will eventually be forced to smash up the Mahdi under great difficulties if you would retain peace in Egypt."

The strong expressions employed in this telegram were caught up by political partisans, who dwelt with rapturous emphasis on the "indelible disgrace" which the British Government was said to have incurred. For my own part, I cannot understand how any impartial person can consider that the British Government were responsible for the difficulties which at that time beset the garrisons of Sennar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola. Those who dwelt on the disgrace which would be incurred if the garrisons of those places fell into the hands of the Mahdi, should have had the courage of their opinions. They should have urged the only possible remedy for preventing the consummation which they deplored. That remedy was the despatch of a strong British expedition, or perhaps I should rather say, several expeditions, to the relief of the garrisons. For the most part, however, the critics shrank from adopting the logical consequences of their own criticisms.

Although the British Government were under no moral obligation to relieve the Egyptian garrisons, they were under a strong obligation to prevent General Gordon and Colonel Stewart from falling into the hands of the Mahdi. It was becoming more and more probable every day that a military expedition would have to be sent to Khartoum to bring them away. I was so impressed with the necessity for timely preparation that, on April 14, I wrote the following despatch to Lord Granville: "I wish again to draw your Lordship's attention to General Gordon's position at Khartoum. In doing so, I wish particularly to state that I have no sort of wish to urge that an expedition should be sent to relieve General Gordon, unless, after very full consideration, it would appear that no other alternative can be adopted. No one can entertain stronger objections than I do to the despatch of a force to Khartoum, but, at the same time, Lord Hartington has declared in the House of Commons that Her Majesty's Government feel that 'they are greatly responsible for General Gordon's safety,' and, even if no such declaration had been made, the fact is in itself sufficiently obvious.

"I think it my duty, therefore, to lay before your Lordship the following remarks, more with a view to showing what the actual situation is, so far as can be ascertained, than with the object of making any very definite proposals in connection with it. That situation is one of such very great difficulty that I frankly confess that I hesitate to advise very positively on it.

"Your Lordship will observe that in one of General Gordon's most recent telegrams, which are enclosed in my despatch of the 9th instant, he says that for the next two months to come, that is to say, to the end of May, he is as safe at Khartoum as at Cairo.

"I am not quite sure whether this statement is to be read as signifying that General Gordon can hold out for two months and no more. I trust this is not his meaning, for it would, I conceive, be impossible for an expedition to reach Khartoum by the end of May.

"Former telegrams had led us to suppose that General Gordon had provisions for six months, and if the Mahdi makes any advance, it is not probable that he will do so before September or October. I have asked him to explain this point more fully, but the difficulty of communicating with Khartoum is very great, and in any case a considerable time must elapse before I can get an answer.

"In the meanwhile, as it appears to me, we are in this dilemma—as a last resource the Government would, I conceive, be obliged to go to the help of General Gordon. All the authorities whom I have consulted say that, if any operations are to be undertaken along the valley of the Nile, which is by some considered the best route, no time should be lost in making preparations, so as to be ready to move directly the water rises. It may be, and I hope it will be, that General Gordon will be able to extricate himself without any expedition. In that case, the preparations will have been useless. On the other hand, unless they are undertaken now, it may be that, when the necessity for moving arises, so long a delay will ensue as to frustrate the objects of the expedition. Under these circumstances, I venture to think that it is a question worthy of consideration whether the naval and military authorities should not take some preliminary steps in the way of preparing boats, etc., so as to be able to move should the necessity arise. It would be better, I think, to run the risk of incurring some unnecessary expenditure rather than to find ourselves unable to seize the opportunity of moving when the favourable moment arrives."

I left Cairo for England on April 21 to attend the Conference, which was about to sit in London to consider the financial situation of the Egyptian Treasury. Mr. (afterwards Sir Edwin) Egerton was appointed to act as Agent and Consul-General during my absence.

# CHAPTER XXVII

## THE RELIEF EXPEDITION

April 21–October 5, 1884

General Gordon's motives—Spirit in which the question should be approached—Did General Gordon try to carry out the policy of the Government?—The situation at Berber—Messages to General Gordon and his replies—Sir Frederick Stephenson instructed to report on the Relief Expedition—The Suakin-Berber Railway—The fall of Berber—The vote of credit—Lord Wolseley appointed to command the Nile expedition—He arrives at Wadi Halfa—Remarks on the above narrative.

Before proceeding further with the narrative, it will be as well—even at the risk of repeating some remarks which have been already made—to describe the motives which, so far as can be judged, actuated General Gordon's conduct at this time. Did he make any serious effort to carry out the policy of the British and Egyptian Governments in the Soudan? Was that policy practicable? More especially, would it have been possible for him to have retreated from Khartoum without the aid of a relief expedition?

A few preliminary observations are necessary before entering upon an examination of these questions.

In the first place, it is obvious that General Gordon's conduct should be judged with the utmost generosity. I do not consider that this generosity need, or, in the interests of historical truth, should go so far as to exonerate him from blame if, on a careful examination of the evidence, it be found that blame can fairly be imputed to him. But I do hold that, looking to the very difficult situation in which he was placed, to the fact that when he arrived at Khartoum many circumstances must have been brought to his knowledge of which he was ignorant in London and in Cairo, and to the further fact that neither he nor his gallant companion are now alive to answer criticisms or to afford explanations, it will only be just to his memory to place the most favourable construction on anything he either did or said, which may appear blameworthy.

Again, looking to General Gordon's impulsive character, and to his habit of recording any stray idea which flashed through his mind, undue importance should not be attached to any chance expressions which he may have let fall. I have endeavoured to form an idea both of his motives and of the opinions which he held during the siege of Khartoum, based, not so much on any one of his utterances, as on the general tenor of his Journal, letters, and telegrams.

The action of the British Government should also be judged in a somewhat similar spirit. It is neither possible nor desirable that detailed instructions should be given to an official engaged in a difficult work such as that undertaken by General Gordon. All that the Government could do was to lay down the general policy which they wished to pursue, leaving to their subordinate a wide discretion as to the manner of its execution. In judging both of the action of the Government and of the conduct of General Gordon, regard should be had to the spirit rather than to the text of his instructions.

Did, therefore, General Gordon make any serious effort to carry out the policy of the British and Egyptian Governments in the Soudan?

There can be little doubt that when General

Gordon left Cairo he agreed in that policy. Not only did he repeatedly express his agreement in explicit terms, not only did he practically write his own instructions both in London and in Cairo, but the policy, which he was sent to carry out, was in conformity with the opinions to which he had frequently given utterance ever since his first connection with the Soudan. He was never tired of dwelling on the iniquities of Egyptian, or, as he usually called it, Turkish rule in the Soudan. He acknowledged that the country was a "useless possession." He exhorted the British Government "to leave them (the people of the Soudan) as God had placed them."[1] In fact, General Gordon persistently advocated the policy of "The Soudan for the Soudanese." But General Gordon said of himself: "No man in the world is more changeable than I am."[2] There can, in fact, be no doubt that, when he arrived at Khartoum, a complete revulsion took place in his views about the Soudan. He had seen from the first the desirability of endeavouring to provide the country with some settled form of government, and he clung to this policy long after its execution had become wholly impracticable. His first intention was to hand the country over to the local Sultans, but it soon became apparent that there were no local Sultans available who could serve as instruments in the execution of this policy. Then he proposed to set up Zobeir Pasha, and, had his proposal been promptly adopted, it is at least conceivable that the attempt to form an anti-Mahdist government in the Soudan would have been successful. But the opportunity was allowed to slip by. For reasons already narrated, the proposal to utilise Zobeir Pasha's services was rejected. From that moment, it was evident that the Soudan must fall into the hands of the Mahdi. This General Gordon failed to recognise, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the idea of admitting the Mahdi's supremacy was so distasteful to him that he would not recognise the inevitable conclusion, which could alone be drawn from a consideration of the facts of the situation. He clung to the idea of erecting some anti-Mahdist government in the Soudan when, to use Lord Northbrook's metaphor, the project had become nothing more than an *ignis fatuus*. In order to accomplish this end, he was prepared to sacrifice his most cherished convictions. Over and over again he proposed that the Soudan should be handed over to the Turkish administration, against whose malpractices he had before inveighed so vigorously. He was aware that the result would be that the people of the Soudan would be oppressed, but he thought that Turkish oppression was preferable to a recognition of the Mahdi. At the same time, with characteristic inconsistency, whilst he was pressing for the country to be handed over to the Sultan, he admitted that it was preferable to abandon it rather than allow it to remain "under these wretched effete Egyptian Pashas." Whatever may have been the defects of the Egyptian Pashas, there is no reason to suppose that Turkish Pashas would have been in any way superior to them. In fact, as General Gordon well knew, the Egyptian Pashas were at that time nearly all Turks or Circassians.

---

[1] *Memorandum of January* 23, 1884.

[2] *Gordon's Letters to His Sister*, p. x.

The truth is that General Gordon was above all things a soldier, and, moreover, a very bellicose soldier.[1] His fighting instincts were too strong to admit of his working heartily in the interests of peace. The Arabs, he said, "must have one good defeat to wipe out Hicks's disasters and *my* defeats. . . . I do not care to wait to see the Mahdi walk in on your heels into Khartoum. One cannot think that . . . it is a satisfactory termination if, after extricating the garrisons and contenting ourselves with that, we let the Mahdi come down and boast of driving us out. It is a thousand pities to give up Khartoum to the Mahdi when there is a chance of keeping it under Zobeir.[1] So long as the Mahdi is alongside, no peace is possible."

---

[1] Sir Samuel Baker, who knew General Gordon well, said to me, some years after the fall of Khartoum: "When I heard that Gordon was to go to the Soudan, I knew there would be a fight."

In fact, General Gordon wished to "smash up" the Mahdi. This was the keynote of all his actions in the Soudan. "If," he wrote on November 7, "Zobeir had been sent to the Soudan, we would have beaten the Mahdi without any exterior help; it is sad, when the Mahdi is moribund, that we should by evacuation of Khartoum raise him again."

As to his instructions, he threw them to the winds.[2] Both the spirit and the text of his instructions were clear. "The main end to be pursued," he was told in the letter addressed to him on January 25, 1884, "is the evacuation of the Soudan." The policy of establishing some sort of settled government in the Soudan was approved, but this, though desirable, was considered a subsidiary point. It was specifically stated that it must "be fully understood that the Egyptian troops were not to be kept in the Soudan merely with a view to consolidate the power of the new rulers of the country." When it was decided not to employ Zobeir Pasha, General Gordon should have seen that all that remained for him to do was to concentrate his efforts on evacuation. He did nothing of the sort. He thought mainly of the subsidiary portion of his instructions and neglected the main issue.

---

[1] This was written on September 24, 1884, that is to say, several months after the Zobeir policy had been rejected by the Government, and had, in fact, become quite impracticable.

[2] On May 28, 1880, General Gordon wrote to his sister: "Having the views I hold, I could never curb myself sufficiently to remain in Her Majesty's service. Not one in ten million can agree with my motives, and it is no use expecting to change their views."—*Letters, etc.*, p. 158.

But, it may be said, even if General Gordon had abandoned the idea of establishing an anti-Mahdist government in the Soudan, he would still have been unable to carry out his instructions, for the garrisons of the Soudan were scattered, and it was impossible to save all of them. General Gordon appears to have held that it was incumbent on him to save the whole of these garrisons. "I was named," he wrote, "for EVACUATION OF SOUDAN (against which I have nothing to say), *not to run away from Khartoum and leave the garrisons elsewhere to their fate.*" He reverts to this subject over and over again in his Journal.[1] He held that it was "a palpable dishonour" to abandon the garrisons, and that "every one in the Soudan, captive or hemmed in, ought to have the option and power of retreat." On November 19, he wrote: "I declare *positively* and *once for all that I will not leave the Soudan until every one who wants to go down is given the chance to do so,* unless a government is established which relieves me of the charge; therefore, if any emissary or letter comes up here ordering me to come down, I WILL NOT OBEY IT, BUT WILL STAY HERE AND FALL WITH THE TOWN AND RUN ALL RISKS."

All that can be said about arguments of this sort is that they bring to mind General Bosquet's famous remark on the Balaklava charge: "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre."[2] We may admire, and for my own part, I do very much admire General Gordon's personal courage, his disinterestedness, and his chivalrous feeling in favour of the beleaguered garrisons, but admiration of these qualities is no sufficient plea against a condemnation of his conduct on the ground that it was quixotic. In his last letter to his sister, dated December 14, 1884, he wrote: "I am quite happy, thank God, and, like Lawrence, I have tried to do my duty."[1] The phrase, which must have occurred to many a countryman of Sir Henry Lawrence when placed in a position of difficulty or danger, has become historical. The words, under the circumstances in which they were first used by Sir Henry Lawrence and afterwards repeated by General Gordon, are particularly touching. But, after all, when the emotions are somewhat quelled, and the highly dramatic incidents connected with the situation are set aside, reason demands answers to such questions as these: What was General Gordon's duty? Did he in reality try to do his duty?

---

[1] *Journal*, pp. 56, 72, 93, 112, 113, 125, 292, 298, 305, 307.

[2] This remark is frequently attributed to Marshal Canrobert. According to Kinglake (*Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iv. p. 269), it was made by General Bosquet to Mr. Layard in the field and at the time of the charge.

I am not now dealing with General Gordon's character, which was in many respects noble, or with his military defence of Khartoum, which was heroic, but with the political conduct of his mission, and from this point of view I have no hesitation in saying that General Gordon cannot be considered to have tried to do his duty unless a very strained and mistaken view be taken of what his duty was. He appears to me to have set up for himself a certain standard of duty without any deliberate thought of the means by which his objects were to be accomplished, or of the consequences which would probably ensue to the British Government and the British nation from attempting to accomplish them. As a matter of public morality, I cannot think that General Gordon's process of reasoning is defensible. The duty of a public servant placed in his position was to sink his personal opinions, and to consider the wishes and true interests of the Government and the nation whom he was called upon to serve. General Gordon was not sent to Khartoum with orders that he was to secure the retreat of every man, woman, and child who wished to leave the Soudan. He was sent to do the best he could to carry out the evacuation. Much was left to his own discretion. It was felt, when he left Cairo, that it would be very difficult to help the outlying garrisons, particularly those in the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatorial provinces. In giving General Gordon his instructions, therefore, attention was more especially drawn to the garrison and civil population of Khartoum, which were numerically larger than those situated in any other locality, and with whom it was relatively easy to establish communications. It appears to me that General Gordon's principal duty was to do his best to accomplish his difficult mission and, at the same time, to avoid all the misery, bloodshed, and waste of money, which would certainly occur if it became necessary to send a British expedition to the Soudan. The British Government were not responsible for the position in which the Soudan garrisons were placed. They might, indeed, have been made prisoners, and that was the worst that could have happened. As Lord Granville, with great good sense, wrote to me on March 14: "If Gordon can save the garrisons of Khartoum, of Berber, and of Dongola, it will be in itself a great feat. Gordon ridiculed to us the idea of the garrisons being massacred, and proved to be right as regarded Tokar." The capture of the outlying garrisons by the Mahdi would certainly have been a much less evil than the despatch of a

---

[1] *Letters, etc.*, p. 290.

British expedition to relieve Khartoum. It must also be remembered that the presence of a British force at Khartoum would not have assisted the distant garrisons in the Darfour, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and Equatorial provinces. General Gordon, I conceive, would hardly have proposed to send a British expedition to those remote regions.[1]

General Gordon, however, took a different, and, as I think, a mistaken view of his duty. He wrote on October 1: "*I think* we are bound to extricate the garrisons whatever it costs." He was aware that these were not the views of the British Government, for he added: "*they* (*i.e.* the Government) *do not*," but although his military training had instilled into him a certain sense of discipline, which he could not altogether shake off, he had a singular habit, when he felt that he was acting insubordinately, of discovering a number of fallacious arguments—*mentis gratissimi errores*—to still the prickings of his official conscience. In this case, he appears to have thought that his personal responsibility was covered when he suggested that, as he objected to carry out the views of the British Government, Abdul Kader Pasha should be appointed in his place, but he added: "I own the proposition I make is in some degree a trap, for I feel confident that there will be no end of trouble even in placing Abdul Kader Pasha in my place and trying to evacuate."

The truth is that General Gordon was so eager to "smash the Mahdi," and so possessed with the idea that it was the bounden duty of the Government to extricate all the garrisons, that he tried to force the hand of the Government and to oblige them to send an expedition to the Soudan. His personal reputation for good faith towards the people of the Soudan was involved in the despatch of a British expedition. So early as February 27, as has been already mentioned,[1] he issued a Proclamation, in which the following words occurred: "British troops are now on their way to Khartoum." The intention in issuing this Proclamation was, without doubt, to produce a moral effect, for he was at the time perfectly well aware that there existed no intention of sending a British force to Khartoum. But the people of that town naturally took him at his word. They believed for a time that British troops were really coming, and when they found that none arrived, they thought that the British Government had "deserted" them,[2] the fact being that the pledge to afford military assistance had been given by General Gordon on his own responsibility without consultation of any kind with either the British Government or their representative in Cairo.

---

[1] In one passage of his Journal, however, he speaks of the desirability of sending a British force to Kordofan (p. 86). He appears to have thought that it would not be necessary "to go fifty miles beyond Khartoum."

That General Gordon felt that he was under an obligation to carry out the pledges, which he had so rashly given, cannot be doubted. On October 6, he wrote: "The appearance of one British soldier or officer here settles the question of relief *vis-à-vis* the townspeople, for then they know that I have not told them lies"; and in an undated telegram, received on September 18, 1884, he said: "Through having so often promised the people of Khartoum that assistance would come, we are now as liars in their eyes."

Obviously, the best thing General Gordon could have done, after communication with Cairo was cut off, would have been to have retreated to Berber with the Khartoum garrison, and such of the civil population as wished to leave the place. But he does not appear to have made any serious attempt to do so, because he thought that, if he retreated, there would be less probability of the British Government sending an expedition for the relief of the outlying garrisons. On October 5, he made the following significant entry in his Journal: "It may be argued, Why not retreat on Berber? I would rather not do that, for I would wish to show in a positive way, that I had no part or lot in the abandoning of the garrisons," etc., etc. A later entry in his Journal, dated October 29, puts the case still more clearly: "I wanted to capture Berber, which was the proper military operation to undertake. . . . Perhaps if *we* had taken Berber, Her Majesty's Government would have said that no expedition was necessary for the *relief of the garrisons*; but it would not have been correct to reason thus, for, though Berber might have been taken, we could not have garrisoned it; and it would have been a barren victory, and not have done much towards the solution of the Soudan problem, or the withdrawal of the garrisons, while it might, on the other hand, have stopped the expedition for *their relief*."[1]

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 490.

[2] *Journal*, p. 307.

I think that this was a wrong view to take. Leaving on one side any question of official subordination, and leaving aside also the waste of money, which was subsequently involved, and for the expenditure of which General Gordon was certainly in some measure responsible, I consider that it was of greater importance to the British nation to have been spared the loss of such valuable public servants as General Gordon himself, Sir Herbert Stewart, General Earle, and the many other gallant Englishmen who fell during the subsequent campaign in the Soudan, than to have prevented the outlying garrisons at Sennar and elsewhere from being taken prisoner by the Mahdi.

---

[1] Another instance of the curious arguments by which General Gordon sought to justify to himself his own conduct may here be given. On September 19 he wrote: "I think I say truly, I have never asked for a British expedition. I asked for 200 men to be sent to Berber at a time when, Graham having beaten Osman Digna, one might have supposed there was no risk for those 200 men." General Gordon, as a soldier, must have known that the British Government would never have agreed to sending so small a force as 200 men to Berber. But, in truth, General Gordon's contention that he never asked for a British expedition cannot be maintained. Not only the specific words, but the whole tenor of his Journal shows that all his actions and opinions were of a nature to force the Government into sending an expedition.

For these reasons I do not think that it can be held that General Gordon made any serious effort to carry out the main ends of British and Egyptian policy in the Soudan. He thought more of his personal opinions than of the interests of the State. He did not adapt his means to his ends. He knew, or at all events he should have known, what were the main and what the subsidiary objects of British policy, and he deliberately ranked the second before the first, because his personal predilections tended in that direction. He was left a wide discretionary power, and he used it in a manner opposed to the spirit, if not to the actual text, of his instructions. However much we may admire his personal heroism, the facts narrated above are, in my opinion, a conclusive proof that a more unfortunate choice could scarcely have been made than that of General Gordon to carry out the policy of evacuating the Soudan. The execution of that policy should have been in the hands of a man who could fight if necessary, but who would devote all his efforts to turning his mission into one of peace rather than of war; he should have been cool, self-controlled, clear-headed, and consistent, deliberate in the formation of his plans after a careful study of the facts with which he had to deal, and steadfast in their execution when once his mind was made up. He should have had a sufficient knowledge of English public life to have been able to form some fairly accurate conjecture of the motives which were likely to guide the British Government, even if no definite expression of opinion had been conveyed to him. General Gordon possessed none of these qualities. He was extremely pugnacious. He was hot-headed, impulsive, and swayed by his emotions. It is a true saying that "he that would govern others, first should be the master of himself." One of the leading features of General Gordon's strange character was his total absence of self-control. He was liable to fits of ungovernable and often of most unreasonable passion. He formed rapid opinions without deliberation, and rarely held to one opinion for long. His Journal, in which his thoughts from day to day are recorded, is, even in the expurgated form in which it was published, a mass of inconsistencies. He knew nothing of English public life, or, generally, of the springs of action which move governing bodies. He appears to have been devoid of the talent, so valuable to a public servant in a distant country, of transporting himself in spirit elsewhere. His imagination, indeed, ran riot, but whenever he endeavoured to picture to himself what was passing in Cairo or London, he arrived at conclusions which were not only unworthy of himself, but grotesque, as, for instance, when he likened himself to Uriah the Hittite, and insinuated that the British Government hoped that he and his companions would be killed or taken prisoners by the Mahdi. In fact, except personal courage, great fertility in military resource, a lively though sometimes ill-directed repugnance to injustice, oppression, and meanness of every description, and a considerable power of acquiring influence over those, necessarily limited in numbers, with whom he was brought in personal contact, General Gordon does not appear to have possessed any of the qualities which would have fitted him to undertake the difficult task he had in hand.

I now turn to the other questions propounded at the beginning of this chapter. Was the execution of the policy laid down by the British Government possible? More especially, would it have been possible for General Gordon to have retreated from Khartoum if no expedition had been sent to his relief?

The answer to the first question depends on the view taken as to the scope of British policy. If it be held, with General Gordon, that the British Government were under an obligation to withdraw every one who wished to leave from the most remote provinces of the Soudan, then there can be no hesitation in saying that the policy was impossible of execution. But, for reasons which have been already given, I do not think that the British Government were under any such obligation.[1] If the garrison and civil population of Khartoum could have been saved, a great feat would, as Lord Granville said, have been accomplished, and, considering the extreme difficulties of the situation, General Gordon would have done all that could reasonably have been expected of him.

It is difficult to give a positive answer to the question of whether General Gordon could have retreated from Khartoum, if no expedition had been sent to his relief. On March 27, 1884, Colonel Coetlogon, who was then at Cairo, wrote to me: "The White Nile to Berber is very low, and there are only two small steamers that can make the passage; the river begins to rise about the middle of May. I consider that a retreat of a force by river is now impossible, even if unopposed, on account of the lowness of the river."

---

[1] The views of the Khedive, when General Gordon started from Cairo, were thus stated to Baron Malortie: "I have no doubt that Gordon Pasha will do his best to sacrifice as few as possible; and, should he succeed, with God's help, in accomplishing the evacuation of Khartoum and the chief posts in the Eastern Soudan, he will be entitled to the everlasting gratitude of my people."—*Too Late*, p. 4.

Would it, however, have been possible to have effected a retreat by land?

It is almost certain that after May 26, on which day Berber fell into the hands of the Dervishes, retreat by land was impossible. When General Gordon was asked his reasons for remaining at Khartoum, he wrote in his Journal: "The *reasons* are those horribly plucky Arabs," and there cannot be any doubt that at the time he wrote these words (September 19, 1884), the explanation was sufficient.

It is, however, not so certain whether, prior to May 26, the operation might not have been undertaken with a fair prospect of success. "I wanted," General Gordon wrote, on October 29, "to capture Berber, which was the proper military operation." "Had it not been," he wrote on September 19, "for the defeat of Mehemet Ali Pasha,[1] I should have got out at least two-thirds of those at Khartoum and Sennar." On the other hand, the passage already quoted from his Journal[2] shows that he did not care for the capture of Berber as it would "not have done much towards the solution of the Soudan problem or withdrawal of the garrisons, while it might, on the other hand, have stopped the expedition for *their relief*."

It is impossible to draw any very definite conclusions from the evidence which is available on this subject. All that can be said is that the operation of retreat would have been one of very great difficulty, but it is not certain that it would have been altogether impossible if it had been undertaken before the middle of May. It is clear, however, that inasmuch as General Gordon considered, first, that he was bound to establish some settled government at Khartoum, and secondly, that he was under an obligation to save the garrisons of Sennar, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and the Equatorial Province, he never contemplated the possibility of withdrawing from Khartoum and leaving the other garrisons to their fate.

---

[1] This was the defeat at El-Eilafun on the Blue Nile, which took place on September 14.—Wingate, *Mahdiism, etc.*, p. 157.

[2] *Vide ante*, p. 569.

To resume the narrative. It has been already mentioned that by the end of March 1884, all regular communication with Khartoum was cut off. Then followed four or five months of fatal indecision. It was not till August, or even September, that it was definitely decided to send a relief expedition. I will endeavour to summarise the correspondence which passed during that period.

On April 21, Lord Granville telegraphed to Mr. Egerton that "the danger to Berber appeared to be imminent." Mr. Egerton was, therefore, requested, after consultation with the authorities at Cairo, to report "whether there was any step, by negotiation or otherwise, which could be taken at once to relieve it." Mr. Egerton replied, on April 23, to the effect that there was no possibility of effecting anything by negotiation without the employment of force, that Nubar Pasha wished to send two Egyptian battalions at once to Berber, that Sir Frederick Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood objected to sending the Egyptian troops by themselves, but considered that it would be possible to send an Anglo-Egyptian force to Berber either over the Korosko desert, or *viâ* Wadi Halfa and Dongola, but that, at the most favourable computation, it would take not less than eight weeks to reach Berber by the Korosko route, or sixteen weeks *viâ* Dongola. "All," Mr. Egerton said, "that can be done for the immediate safety of Berber is to give the assurance that English material aid shall be rendered as soon as possible." Lord Granville replied that the British Government could not sanction the attempt to send a British force to Berber *viâ* Korosko, neither would they allow Egyptian troops to be sent alone. The Governor of Berber was to be informed that no immediate assistance could be given to him.

On the same day (April 23), Lord Granville telegraphed to Mr. Egerton: "Gordon should be at once informed, in cypher, by several messengers at some intervals between each, through Dongola as well as Berber, or in such other way as may on the spot be deemed most prompt and certain, that he should keep us informed, to the best of his ability, not only as to immediate, but as to any prospective danger at Khartoum; that, to be prepared for any such danger, he should advise us as to the force necessary in order to secure his removal, its amount, character, route for access to Khartoum, and time of operation; that we do not propose to supply him with Turkish or other force for the purpose of undertaking military expeditions, such being beyond the scope of the commission he holds, and at variance with the pacific policy which was the purpose of his mission to the Soudan; that if with this knowledge he continues at Khartoum, he should state to us the cause and intention with which he so continues. Add expressions both of respect and gratitude for his gallant and self-sacrificing conduct, and for the good he has achieved."

Various unsuccessful efforts were made to communicate this message to General Gordon. It was not till the third week of May that a messenger was found who, it was thought, would be able to get into Khartoum. It was then (May 17) decided to make the following additions to the message:[1]

---

[1] In the interval between April 23 and May 17, Nubar Pasha and Sir Evelyn Wood asked Mr. Egerton "to request Her Majesty's Government to give their opinion as to whether or not the Moudir

"As the original plan for the evacuation of the Soudan has been dropped, and as aggressive operations cannot be undertaken with the countenance of Her Majesty's Government, General Gordon is enjoined to consider and either to report upon, or if feasible, to adopt, at the first proper moment, measures for his own removal and for that of the Egyptians at Khartoum who have suffered for him or who have served him faithfully, including their wives and children, by whatever route he may consider best, having especial regard to his own safety and that of the other British subjects.

"With regard to the Egyptians above referred to, General Gordon is authorised to make free use of money rewards or promises at his discretion. For example, he is at liberty to assign to Egyptian soldiers at Khartoum sums for themselves and for persons brought with them per head, contingent on their safe arrival at Korosko, or whatever point he may consider a place of safety; or he may employ and pay the tribes in the neighbourhood to escort them. Her Majesty's Government presume that the Soudanese at Khartoum are not in danger. In the event of General Gordon having despatched any person or agent to other points, he is authorised to spend any money required for the purpose of recalling them or securing their safety."[1]

---

of Dongola should be told to make the best terms he could for his safety and that of the people with him." Mr. Egerton, in telegraphing this request to Lord Granville, added: "I can only explain their asking a question, which has become one of pure humanity, by their belief that, if some promise be obtained from Her Majesty's Government to send an expedition later on to relieve General Gordon, the Governor of Dongola might be enabled to offer some resistance to the stream of rebellion." This was, in effect, the same proposal which I had made in my telegram of March 26 (*vide ante*, p. 543-545). On May 13, Lord Granville replied: "Her Majesty's Government can make no promise as to future action. The Moudir should be told to make the best terms he can."

[1] General Gordon received this telegram. Allusion to it is made on pp. 39 and 59 of his Journal.

It was not till July 20 that a message was received from General Gordon, dated June 22. It was evidently not in answer to Mr. Egerton's messages. It was addressed to the Moudir of Dongola, and merely stated that Khartoum and Sennar were still holding out, and that General Gordon wished to be informed of "the place where the expedition coming from Cairo is, and the numbers coming." In forwarding this letter, the Moudir of Dongola requested to be informed of the nature of the reply which should be sent. Lord Granville, to whom the matter was referred, replied to Mr. Egerton: "Her Majesty's Government desire, in the first place, that the messages sent to General Gordon on the 23rd April and the 17th May should be repeated to him, unless you are convinced that he has already received them; and he should further be informed that these communications will show him the interest taken by Her Majesty's Government in his safety; that Her Majesty's Government continue to be anxious to learn from himself his views and position, so that if danger has arisen, or is likely to arise in the manner they have described, they may be in a position to take measures accordingly."

On August 17, another glimpse was obtained of what was passing at Khartoum. On that day, Mr. Egerton informed Lord Granville that the Moudir of Dongola had received a letter from General Gordon, dated July 28. This letter stated that Khartoum and Sennar were safe, and asked for information as to "the route and the numbers of the expedition coming from Cairo." By that time, preparations were being made for the despatch of a relief expedition. On August 18, Mr. Egerton asked Lord Granville whether he might inform General Gordon of the nature of these preparations. In reply, Lord Granville telegraphed: "Inform

General Gordon of the preparations for his relief in case of need; refer him to former messages, with directions from Her Majesty's Government to conform to them, and ask the causes of our not having received any reply."

On August 28, a further letter was received from General Gordon, dated July 13, in which he said: "We are all well and can hold out for four months." On August 30, Mr. Egerton instructed Colonel Kitchener in the following sense: "Tell Gordon steamers are being passed over the Second Cataract, and that we wish to be informed exactly, through Dongola, when he expects to be in difficulties as to provisions and ammunition."

It was not till the 17th, 18th, and 20th of September that several messages were received from General Gordon *viâ* Dongola, apparently in answer to the inquiries made by the British Government.[1] A little later (September 28) some letters were received from General Gordon, *viâ* Suakin, the latest of which was dated July 31st. The gist of General Gordon's answer to the Government inquiries was contained in the following words: "You ask me to state cause and intention in staying at Khartoum knowing Government means to abandon Soudan, and in answer I say, I stay at Khartoum because Arabs have shut us up and will not let us out." In a telegram to the Khedive, General Gordon complained that the English telegrams did not state what were the intentions of the Government, "and only ask for information and waste time." He insisted again on the necessity of sending Zobeir Pasha and on entering into negotiations with the Porte, "so as to render it possible to extinguish the flame of this false Mahdi before it becomes difficult." He expressed his intention of retaking Berber, burning the town, and returning to Khartoum. "Stewart Pasha," he said, "will proceed to Dongola. Then I will send to the Equator to withdraw the people who are there. After that, it will be impossible for Mohamed Ahmed to come here, and please God, he will meet his death by the hands of the Soudanese. . . . It will be impossible to leave Khartoum without a regular government established by some Power. I will look after the troops on the Equator, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and in Darfour, although it may cost me my life. Perhaps the British Government will be displeased with the advice which I have given. The people of the Soudan are also displeased with me on account of my fighting against them, and on account of their not attaining their object in following the Mahdi."

---

[1] These telegrams are given at length in *Egypt*, No. 35 of 1884, pp. 95-99.

The nature of the military preparations, which were being made whilst the correspondence summarised above was going on, must now be described.

It has been already explained that, on April 14, I urged the British Government to prepare for a relief expedition.[1] A few days earlier (April 8), Lord Wolseley addressed a Memorandum to Lord Hartington in which he discussed the composition of the force which would be required, and the route which it would be advisable to take. In this Memorandum Lord Wolseley said: "Time is the most important element in this question. . . . I recommend immediate and active preparations for operations that may be forced upon us by and by."

In consequence of these recommendations, Sir Frederick Stephenson was instructed, on April 25, to report "on the best plan of operation for the relief of Gordon, if necessary." A long interval, however, elapsed before anything was done. It was at first intended to despatch a force from Suakin to Berber, and, on June 14, Sir Frederick Stephenson was directed to take some preliminary steps to facilitate the construction of a railway from Suakin, should one eventually become necessary. But three weeks later (July 4), it was explained that the Government had no intention of undertaking any expedition "unless it should appear to be absolutely necessary for ensuring the safe withdrawal of General Gordon from Khartoum." The Government were still waiting for General Gordon's replies to the questions which had been addressed to him. So little was known of what was going on in the Soudan that, although reports had reached Egypt of the fall of Berber, which took place on May 26, all doubts as to their truth were not removed until a month later, that is to say, on June 27.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, pp. 556-558.

It was not till August 8 that, a vote of credit for £300,000 having been obtained from Parliament, Lord Hartington authorised Sir Frederick Stephenson to take certain preliminary measures with a view to moving troops south of Wadi Halfa. A good deal of difference of opinion existed amongst the military authorities as to whether it would be desirable to move by Suakin, or to adopt the Nile route. Lord Wolseley preferred the latter alternative, and his view was eventually adopted by the Government.

Whilst, however, authorising these preliminary measures, the Government only did so under the following reserve: "Her Majesty's Government are not at present convinced that it will be impossible for General Gordon, acting on the instructions which he has received, to secure the withdrawal from Khartoum, either by the employment of force or of pacific means, of the Egyptian garrisons, and of such of the inhabitants as may desire to leave.

"The time, however, which has elapsed since the receipt of authentic information of General Gordon's exact position, plans, and intentions, is so long, and the state of the surrounding country, as evidenced by the impossibility of communicating with him, is so disturbed, that Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the time has arrived when some further measure for obtaining accurate information as to his position, and if necessary, for rendering him assistance, should be adopted."

On August 26, Lord Wolseley was appointed to command the expedition. He arrived in Cairo on September 10, with Lord Northbrook[1] and myself. On September 17, Lord Hartington, whilst complying with a demand made by Lord Wolseley for reinforcements, said: "In arriving at this decision, Her Majesty's Government desire to remind you that no decision has yet been arrived at to send any portion of the force under your command beyond Dongola. . . . You are fully aware of the views of Her Majesty's Government on this subject, and know how averse they are to undertake any warlike expedition not called for by absolute necessity."

It was not till October 8, that is to say, more than five months after communication between Cairo and Khartoum had been interrupted, that I was authorised to issue to Lord Wolseley instructions, which had been drafted in consultation between him, Lord Northbrook, and myself. The principal passage in these instructions was as follows: "The primary object of the expedition up the valley of the Nile is to bring away General Gordon and Colonel Stewart from Khartoum. When that object has been secured, no further offensive operations of any kind are to be undertaken.

---

[1] Lord Northbrook, as will be hereafter explained (see Chapter XLV.), was at the time sent on a special mission to Egypt.

"Although you are not precluded from advancing as far as Khartoum, should you consider such a step essential to insure the safe retreat of General Gordon and Colonel Stewart, you should bear in mind that Her Majesty's Government is desirous to limit the sphere of your military operations as much as possible. They rely on you, therefore, not to advance any farther southwards than is absolutely necessary in order to attain the primary object of the expedition. You will endeavour to place yourself in communication with General Gordon and Colonel Stewart as soon as possible."

Before these instructions were issued, Lord Wolseley had left Cairo. On October 5, he arrived at Wadi Halfa, and the Nile Campaign may be said to have definitely begun.

I now propose to make some remarks on the events narrated above.

The summer months of 1884 constitute the most gloomy period of the British connection with Egypt. It would seem, indeed, as if some spiteful fairy had presided over the deliberations of the Gladstone Government when Egyptian affairs came under consideration. Mr. Gladstone said (February 23, 1885): "The difficulties of the case have passed entirely beyond the limits of such political and military difficulties as I have known in the course of an experience of half a century." Under these circumstances, it can be no matter for surprise that mistakes were made. Subsequent events have shown that the Government were sometimes right and sometimes wrong in their decisions. In my opinion, in so far as the broad lines of their general policy are concerned, they were more right than their critics. But when it came to a question of action, they appear, whether from accident or want of foresight, to have rarely done the right thing at the right moment.

> Festinare nocet, nocet et cunctatio saepe,
> Tempore quaeque suo qui facit, ille sapit.

The Government were, indeed, remarkably unsuccessful in avoiding the extremes of tardiness and precipitation. If the attack on the Alexandria forts had been delayed for a day or two, reinforcements would have arrived, and the town would not have been at the mercy of Arábi's rabble. If the expedition to Tokar had arrived a day or two sooner, the Egyptian garrison would have been relieved. There can scarcely be a doubt that if the decision to send an expedition to General Gordon's relief had been taken in April or May, instead of in August, the objects of the expedition would have been attained. The main responsibility for this delay rests on Mr. Gladstone. "I want," Sir Stafford Northcote said in the House of Commons on February 23, 1885, "to see the Government a little inconsistent and to realise facts." Mr. Gladstone was slow to recognise facts when they ran counter to his wishes. The natural result ensued. The facts asserted themselves.

When a vote of censure on the conduct of the Government was moved in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone acknowledged that errors of judgment might have been committed. "It is not for me," he said, "to arrogate to myself or my colleagues infallibility." But Mr. Gladstone laid claim to "honesty of purpose." Every one who is impartial will readily admit this claim. The only question which admits of discussion is whether the errors of judgment, which were assuredly committed, were excusable or the reverse.

A statesman in the responsible position which Mr. Gladstone then occupied, does well to pause before he calls upon a great nation to put forth its military strength. Can, however, the lengthened pause, which Mr. Gladstone made before he decided to send an expedition to Khartoum, be justified? I will endeavour to answer this question.

Mr. Gladstone's principal reply to his critics is contained in the following words, which he used in the House of Commons on February 23, 1885: "Our contention," he said, "was that we must be convinced that an expedition for the relief of General Gordon was necessary and practicable. We had no proof, as we believed, that General Gordon was in danger within the walls of Khartoum. We believed, and I think we had reason to believe from his own expressions, that it was in the power of General Gordon to remove himself and those immediately associated with him from Khartoum by going to the south. . . . General Gordon said himself, speaking of it as a thing distinctly within his power, that he would in certain contingencies withdraw to the Equator." I proceed to analyse these remarks.

No one will be disposed to contest the statement that, before the Government decided on sending an expedition, it was incumbent on them to be convinced that the adoption of this measure was both "necessary and practicable." It only remains to be considered whether the evidence in respect to both the necessity and the practicability was not sufficient to justify action being taken before the month of August.

The practicability argument may be readily disposed of. It was conclusively answered by Lord Hartington at a later period (February 27) of the debate in which Mr. Gladstone used the words quoted above. With characteristic honesty, Lord Hartington said: "Although the difficulties of a military decision were great, and although there was a difference of opinion among military authorities, I have no hesitation in saying that the justification or, if you will, the excuse of the Government has rested mainly on the fact, which we have never attempted to conceal, that the Government were not, until a comparatively recent period, convinced of the absolute necessity of sending a military expedition to Khartoum." This frank statement, coming from the Minister who was then responsible for the administration of the War Office, effectually disposes of the argument in justification of delay based on the doubtful practicability of the military enterprise.

I turn, therefore, to the question of necessity. "We had no proof," Mr. Gladstone said, "as we believed, that General Gordon was in danger within the walls of Khartoum." The gist of the Government case is contained in these words. The same idea was embodied in all the messages, which Mr. Egerton was instructed to send to General Gordon during the summer of 1884, and which I find it difficult, even after the lapse of many years, to read without indignation. Not only does reason condemn them, but their whole tone runs, without doubt unconsciously, counter to those feelings of generous sympathy, which the position of General Gordon and his companions was so well calculated to inspire. Before General Gordon left London, I had warned the Government that, if he were sent to Khartoum, he would "undertake a service of great difficulty and danger." General Gordon, it is true, had, *more suo*, been inconsistent in his utterances on this subject. He had, in the first place, greatly underrated the difficulties of his task. So late as February 20, 1884, he had spoken of

Khartoum being "as safe as Kensington Park." But the last messages, which he sent before telegraphic communication between Cairo and Khartoum was interrupted, breathed a very different spirit. He spoke, on March 8, of "the storm which was likely to break," of the probability of his being "hemmed in," and he added, with something of prophetic instinct, "I feel a conviction that I shall be caught in Khartoum." Lord Wolseley, myself, and others had dwelt on the dangers of General Gordon's position, and even if no such warnings had been given, the facts spoke for themselves. General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were beleaguered in a remote African town by hordes of warlike savages, who were half mad with fanaticism and elated at their recent successes. Yet Mr. Gladstone wanted further proof that they were in danger. If the proofs which already existed in the early summer of 1884 were not sufficient, one is tempted to ask what evidence would have carried conviction to Mr. Gladstone's mind, and the only possible answer is that Mr. Gladstone was well-nigh determined not to believe a fact which was, naturally enough, most distasteful to him.[1] General Gordon, in a passage of his Journal, which would be humorous if it were not pathetic, has himself described what every one of common sense must think of Mr. Gladstone's attitude during this period. "It is," he wrote on September 23, "as if a man on the bank, having seen his friend in the river already bobbed down two or three times, hails: 'I say, old fellow, let us know when we are to throw you the life-buoy; I know you have bobbed down two or three times, but it is a pity to throw you the life-buoy until you are really *in extremis*, and I want to know *exactly*, for I am a man brought up in a school of exactitude.'"

---

[1] There is a close analogy between Mr. Gladstone's attitude at this time and that of Lord Aberdeen before the Crimean War. Both practised the art of self-deception. "Almost to the last," Mr. Kinglake says (*Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. i. p. 397), "Lord Aberdeen misguided himself. His loathing for war took such a shape that he could not and would not believe in it; and when at last the spectre was close upon him, he covered his eyes and refused to see."

Mr. Gladstone said that General Gordon spoke of withdrawing to the Equator "as a thing distinctly in his power." It is true that in two telegrams of March 9 and of April 7, General Gordon had spoken of the possibility of retiring towards the Equatorial Province, but I had informed Lord Granville, on March 26, that Colonel Coetlogon, who spoke with authority on this subject, ridiculed the idea, and although Colonel Stewart had said at the beginning of April: "I am inclined to think my retreat will be safer by the Equator," the context clearly showed that he only used these words because he considered retreat *viâ* Berber so difficult, unless a British expedition were sent to open the road, that he preferred the desperate risk of a retreat in a southerly direction. It was, in fact, only necessary to look at a map, to glance at the accounts given by General Gordon himself and by Sir Samuel Baker of the physical difficulties to be overcome in moving up the White Nile, and to remember that both banks of that river for a long distance above Khartoum were in the hands of the Dervishes, to appreciate the fact that retreat in the direction of Gondokoro was little better than a forlorn hope.

For these reasons, the arguments adduced by Mr. Gladstone do not appear to afford any sufficient justification for the long delay which ensued before it was decided to send an expedition to Khartoum.

A different class of argument may, however, be advanced in favour of the course adopted by the Government at this time. It may be said that General Gordon never attempted to carry out the policy of the Government, that he was sent to evacuate the Soudan, that he turned his peaceful mission into an endeavour to "smash the Mahdi," and that he could have retreated from Khartoum, but that he never attempted to do so. Little was said about this aspect of the question at the time, for this line of argument necessarily involved reflections on General Gordon's conduct, which, under all the circumstances of the case, would have been considered ungenerous, and which, moreover, would have produced little effect, for the public were in no humour to listen to them. General Gordon, in Mr. Gladstone's words, was considered a "hero of heroes," and, at the time, a defence based on any faults he might have committed would, for all Parliamentary purposes, have been worse than none at all. At the same time, the order of ideas embodied in these arguments did to a certain extent find expression. Whilst Sir Stafford Northcote invited the House of Commons to assert the principle that it was incumbent on England to secure "a good and stable government for those portions of the Soudan which were necessary to the security of Egypt," Mr. John Morley, in a powerful speech, moved an amendment which was hostile alike to the Government and to the Opposition. He invited the House to express its regret that "the forces of the Crown were to be employed for the overthrow of the power of the Mahdi."[1] Moreover, although Mr. Gladstone's parliamentary position obliged him to oppose Mr. Morley's amendment, it is perhaps no very far-fetched conjecture to imagine that this amendment embodied an opinion, which did not differ widely from the views which Mr. Gladstone personally entertained. Mr. Gladstone had formerly spoken of the Soudanese as a "people rightly struggling to be free." The phrase had become historical. It was indiscreet in the mouth of an English Prime Minister, but at one time it contained a certain element of truth.[1] Moreover, I often heard at the time that Mr. Gladstone reasoned somewhat after this fashion: "The Soudanese wish to get rid of the Egyptians. The Egyptians, under pressure from England, are prepared to leave the Soudan. It is inconceivable that, if the matter were properly explained to the Mahdi, he would not agree to facilitate the peaceful retreat of the Egyptian garrisons." To the logical European mind this position appears unassailable, but Mr. Gladstone never realised the fact that he was dealing with a race of savage fanatics to whom European processes of reasoning were wholly incomprehensible. The Mahdist movement was not only a revolt against misgovernment. It was also, in the eyes of its followers, a religious movement having for its object the forced conversion of the whole world to Mahdiism. There can be little doubt that it would have been practically impossible to treat with the Mahdi on the basis of a peaceful withdrawal of the Egyptian troops.

---

[1] Mr. Morley's amendment was rejected by 455 to 112 votes.

The line of argument to which allusion is made above, would appear more worthy of attention than that actually adopted by the Government. It has been already shown that General Gordon paid little heed to his instructions, that he was consumed with a desire to "smash the Mahdi," and that the view that he was constrained to withdraw every one who wished to leave from the most distant parts of the Soudan was, to say the least, quixotic. The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that it was a mistake to send General

---

[1] I mean that the Mahdist revolt would never have taken place if the people of the Soudan had not wished to throw off the Egyptian yoke.

Gordon to the Soudan. But do they afford any justification for the delay in preparing and in despatching the relief expedition? I cannot think that they do so. Whatever errors of judgment General Gordon may have committed, the broad facts, as they existed in the early summer of 1884, were that he was sent to Khartoum by the British Government, who never denied their responsibility for his safety, that he was beleaguered, and that he was, therefore, unable to get away. It is just possible that he could have effected his retreat if, having abandoned the southern posts, he had moved northwards with the Khartoum garrison in April or early in May. As time went on and nothing was heard of him, it became more and more clear that he either could not or would not,—probably that he could not,—move. The most indulgent critic would scarcely extend beyond June 27 the date at which the Government should have decided on the question of whether a relief expedition should or should not be despatched. On that day, the news that Berber had been captured on May 26 by the Dervishes was finally confirmed. Yet it was not till six weeks later that the Government obtained from Parliament the funds necessary to prepare for an expedition.

I began the examination of this branch of the subject by asking whether the errors of judgment committed by Mr. Gladstone's Government in the summer of 1884 were excusable. The points, which have been previously discussed, such as the tacit permission given to the Hicks expedition, the despatch of General Gordon to Khartoum, the rejection of Zobeir Pasha's services, and the refusal to make a dash to Berber in March, are questions as to which it may be said, either that the fact of any error having been committed may be contested, or that any condemnatory conclusion must in some degree be based upon an after-knowledge of events, which was not obtainable when the decisive step had to be taken. The same cannot be said of the point now under discussion. The facts were at the time sufficiently clear to any one who wished to understand them, and the conclusions to be drawn from them were obvious. Those conclusions were (1) that unless a military expedition was sent to Khartoum, General Gordon and his companions must sooner or later fall into the hands of the Mahdi; and (2) that prompt action was needed, all the more so because it was only during the short period while the Nile was high that rapidity of movement was possible. If Mr. Gladstone had said that the expenditure of blood and money which would be involved in an expedition to Khartoum was incommensurate with the objects to be attained, the argument would, in my opinion at all events, have been unworthy of the leader of a great nation, and to none of Mr. Gladstone's arguments does a censure of this description in any degree apply. Moreover, the adoption of this attitude would have probably sealed the fate of the Ministry in forty-eight hours. But such a statement would have had the merit of being comprehensible. The argument that no expedition was necessary because General Gordon was not proved to be in danger was so totally at variance with facts, which were patent to all the world, as to be well-nigh incomprehensible.

On these grounds, I maintain that of all the mistakes committed at this period in connection with Egyptian and Soudanese affairs, the delay in sending an expedition to the relief of Khartoum was the least excusable.[1] The House of Commons practically condemned the conduct of the Government. In a full House, the Government only escaped censure by a majority of 14. "If," General Gordon wrote on November 8, "it is right to send up an expedition now, why was it not right to send it up before?" The fact that General Gordon's pathetic question admits of no satisfactory answer must for ever stand as a blot on Mr. Gladstone's political escutcheon.

---

[1] Lord Northbrook wrote to me subsequently (January 13, 1886): "You gave us very distinct warnings in time that if Gordon was to be rescued an expedition would have to be sent, and no one regrets more

than I do that the preparations were delayed from May to August." I may add that, some ten years later, I sent to Lord Northbrook a typewritten copy of the portion of this work which deals with the Soudan. He wrote the following words on the margin opposite the passage to which this note is attached: "I am afraid that all this is quite true. . . . As I had the misfortune to be a member of Mr. Gladstone's Government, I have to bear the blame with the rest. But I resolved never to serve under him again!"

## APPENDIX

### *Note on the Khedive's telegram to General Gordon of September* 14, 1884.

The following entry occurs in General Gordon's Journal (vol. ii. p. 359), dated November 25, 1884: "Tewfik, by a telegram, cancels his Firman, which gives up the Soudan, which I have *torn up*.

"A telegram to the Ulemas from Tewfik says: '*Baring is coming up with Lord Wolseley.*'"

It appears from the numerous discussions which have taken place in connection with the Gordon mission that some misapprehension exists with regard to the circumstances under which the telegrams to which allusion is here made were sent. I propose, therefore, to state what actually took place.

On September 14, 1884, the Khedive sent a telegram to General Gordon. The full text of this telegram is given in a note to an article written by Sir Reginald Wingate, and published in the *United Service Magazine* of July 1892. For my present purposes the following extracts will suffice: "We inform you now that a great change has taken place since the time that the aforenamed (*i.e.* the British) Government advised the evacuation of the Soudan, and communication with you had been cut. . . . But the English troops will shortly occupy Dongola, and Colonel Chermside, the Governor of Suakin, has been ordered to communicate with the tribes regarding Kassala; also Major Kitchener, one of the officers of my new army, is ordered to confer at Dongola, and we hope he will shortly be able to open communication with you. Again, it becomes necessary, under these circumstances, to modify the Firman which we had granted you, so that your authority will now be confined to being Governor of the Soudan, including Khartoum, Sennar, Berber, and their present vicinities. . . . You will also receive the necessary instructions from the British Government, through Sir E. Baring and Lord Wolseley, who has been made Commander-in-Chief of the English expedition, and who is at present in Cairo."

At the same time, a telegram was sent to the Ulema of Khartoum, urging them to do their utmost to maintain the honour of the Government.

So far as I am aware, no British authority was consulted before these telegrams were sent. I certainly never saw them until long after General Gordon's death. Inasmuch, however, as General Gordon could not know that the Khedive had sent the telegrams solely on his own authority, this point is of slight importance.

On receipt of the Khedive's message, General Gordon appears to have published the Proclamation given in Appendix Y to his Journal (vol. ii. p. 552). This Proclamation contains the following passage: "Formerly the Government had decided to transport the Egyptians down to Cairo and abandon the Soudan; and, in fact, some of them had been sent down during the time of Hussein Pasha Yusri, as you yourself saw. On our arrival at Khartoum, on account of pity for you, and in order not to let your country be destroyed, we communicated with the Khedive of Egypt, our Effendi, concerning the importance and inexpediency of abandoning it. Whereupon, the orders for abandoning the Soudan were cancelled."

From a perusal of these documents, it is easy to judge of what took place. On February 27, 1884, that is to say, nine days after his arrival at Khartoum, General Gordon had practically announced to the public the abandonment of the policy which he was sent to carry out. In a Proclamation issued on that day he said: "British troops are now on their way to Khartoum."[1] He had many misgivings as to the correctness of this proceeding. The Khedive's telegram of September 14, 1884, is worded in such a manner as to render it possible to misapprehend its meaning. General Gordon, therefore, readily seized the opportunity to put himself, as he thought, in the right.

A mere comparison of the dates of General Gordon's original Proclamation and of the Khedive's telegrams is sufficient to show that, as evidence as to how far General Gordon endeavoured to carry out his instructions on his arrival at Khartoum, the entry in the Journal on November 25, 1884, is valueless.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 490.

END OF VOL. I

# MODERN EGYPT

# MODERN EGYPT

BY

## THE EARL OF CROMER

> *In his first interview with the Governor of St. Helena, Napoleon said emphatically:* "*Egypt is the most important country in the world.*"
>
> ROSE, *Life of Napoleon*, vol. i. p. 356.

> *Earum proprie rerum sit historia, quibus rebus gerendis interfuerit is qui narret.*
>
> GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, v. 18.

> τὰ δ' ἔργα τῶν πραχθέντων ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος πυνθανόμενος ἠξίωσα γράφειν, οὐδ' ὡς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει, ἀλλ' οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρῆν, καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἑκάστου ἐπεξελθών.
>
> THUCYDIDES, i. 22.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1916

*All rights reserved*

Copyright, 1908,
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1908. Reprinted April, May, August, 1908; January, 1909; March, 1916.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

# CONTENTS

## PART III (*Continued*)

## THE SOUDAN

1882–1907

### CHAPTER XXVIII

### The Fall of Khartoum

October 5, 1884–January 26, 1885

PAGE

Murder of Colonel Stewart—Difficulties of the Expedition—News from General Gordon—Occupation of Jakdul—The battle of Abu Klea—Death of Sir Herbert Stewart—The column reaches the Nile—Two steamers leave for Khartoum—They arrive too late—Events at Khartoum—General Gordon's character—Capitulation of Omdurman—General Gordon's death—Effect on public opinion . . . . . . . . 3

### CHAPTER XXIX

### The Evacuation of the Soudan

January 26, 1885–December 30, 1886

Lord Wolseley urges the necessity of an autumn campaign—The Government hesitate—And then agree—Sir Redvers Buller retreats to Korti—Battle of Kirbekan—The movement on Berber arrested—Operations at Suakin—Action at Hashin—And at Tofrik—Suspension of the Suakin operations—The autumn campaign abandoned—Question of holding Dongola—Change of Government in England—Evacuation of Dongola—Death of the Mahdi—Battle of Ginniss—Review of British policy . . . . . . . . 18

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE DÉBRIS OF THE SOUDAN

PAGE

The outlying provinces:—1. *Darfour*: Surrender of the province—The Senoussieh sect—The revolt of Abu Gemaizeh. 2. *Bahr-el-Ghazal*: Lupton Bey surrenders—His death. 3. *Equatoria*: Emin Pasha summoned to surrender—He maintains his position—The Stanley expedition. 4. *Sennar*: The garrison surrenders. 5. *Kassala*: The garrison surrenders. 6. *The Abyssinian Frontier Garrisons*: The Hewett treaty—The garrisons of Amadib, Senhit, Galabat, Gera, and Gedaref. 7. *Berbera*: Its political status—It is occupied by British troops. 8. *Harrar*: Withdrawal of the Egyptian garrison—Installation of the Emir Abdullah—King Menelek occupies the province. 9. *Zeyla*: It is occupied by British troops. 10. *Tajourrah*: The French occupy it. 11. *Massowah*: Its political status—Attitude of the British Government—The Italians occupy Massowah . . 35

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE DEFENCE OF EGYPT

1886–1892

The Egyptian army—Negotiations with the Dervishes—Fighting on the frontier—The siege of Suakin—Defeat of Osman Digna—Wad-el-Nejumi—Nejumi advances—The battles of Argin and of Toski—Death of Wad-el-Nejumi—Results of the battle—Situation at Suakin—The reoccupation of Tokar—Defeat of Osman Digna . . . . . . . 60

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE RECONQUEST OF KHARTOUM

OCTOBER 1895–SEPTEMBER 1898

Necessity of reconquering the Soudan—Danger of premature action—The Italian defeat at Adua—It is decided to advance on Dongola—Provision of funds—Sir Herbert Kitchener—Indian expedition to Suakin—Railway construction—Battle of Firket—Capture of Dongola—The Egyptian Government repay the money advanced by the Commissioners of the Debt—The British Government advance £800,000—Question of a further offensive movement—Capture of Abu Hamed and Berber—Reoccupation of Kassala—British troops sent to the Soudan—The battle of the Atbara—The battle of Omdurman—Cost of the campaign—The War Office—The policy of reconquest . 79

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE NEW SOUDAN

PAGE

Question of the future political status of the Soudan—Anomalies of the British position—Objections to annexation—And to complete incorporation with Egypt—Intricacy of the problem—The two flags—Speech at Omdurman—The right of conquest—The Agreement of January 19, 1899—Its unusual nature—Its reception by Europe—Advantages of a Free Trade policy . . . . . . . . 111

# PART IV

# THE EGYPTIAN PUZZLE

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE DWELLERS IN EGYPT

The Englishman's mission—Conditions under which it was undertaken—Population of Egypt—Its mixed character—Hostility to England—Main tenets of Islam—Its failure as a social system—Degradation of women—Immutability of the law—Slavery—Intolerance—Incidents of religious belief and ceremonial—Mental and moral attributes—Seclusion of women—Polygamy—Divorce—Coarseness of literature and conversation—Filial piety—Government—Conservatism—Spirit of the laws—Language—Art—Music—Customs—Obstacles to England's mission . . . . . . . . 123

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE MOSLEMS

Classification of the population—The Turco-Egyptians—The Egyptians—The hierarchy—The Grand Mufti—The head of the El-Azhar University—The Grand Kadi—The Sheikh el-Bekri—Mohammed el-Saadat—Abdul-Khalik el-Saadat—Mohammed Abdu—Mohammed Beyram—The Omdehs and Sheikhs—Their submissiveness to the Pashas—Their sympathy with Arábi—Their tyranny over the fellaheen—Their feelings towards England—The Fellaheen—The Bedouins . . 168

APPENDIX.—Translation of a Letter from a Sheikh of Keneh to a Sheikh of the Mosque of Seyyidna-Hussein at Cairo . . 200

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE CHRISTIANS

PAGE

The COPTS—The conservatism of their religion—Their character—Their attitude towards the English—The reform movement—The SYRIANS—Their position—Their unpopularity—Their attitude towards the English—The ARMENIANS—Their subserviency to the Turks—Nubar Pasha—His son Boghos—Yacoub Pasha Artin—Tigrane Pasha—The Egyptians should not be weighed in European scales . . . . 201

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE EUROPEANISED EGYPTIANS

The Europeanised Egyptians are generally Agnostics—Effects of Europeanising the East—Gallicised Egyptians—Attractions of French civilisation—Unsuitability of the French system to form the Egyptian character—The official classes generally hostile to England . . . . . . . 228

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE EUROPEANS

Number of Europeans—The Levantines—Their characteristics—The Greeks—Their commercial enterprise—The English—The Army of Occupation—Anglo-Egyptian officials—Feelings entertained by other Europeans towards the English—Summary of the classes friendly and hostile to England . . . 245

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

Nature of the machinery—Parts of the machine—1. THE SULTAN—The Firman of 1892—The Sinai Peninsula—2. THE KHEDIVE—Rescript of August 28, 1878—Constitutionalism of Tewfik Pasha—3. THE MINISTERS—The Departments—Position of an Egyptian Minister—4. THE ORGANIC LAW of May 1, 1883—The Provincial Councils—The Legislative Council—The Legislative Assembly . . . . . . 260

## CHAPTER XL

### THE BRITISH OFFICIALS

PAGE

Qualifications required of an Anglo-Egyptian official—Positions of the civil and military officials—The French in Tunis—The Financial Adviser—Sir Edgar Vincent—The Judicial Adviser—History of his appointment—Sir Raymond West—Justice under Egyptian management—Sir John Scott—The Public Works Department—Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff—Sir William Garstin—The Financial Secretary—Blum Pasha—Lord Milner—Sir Eldon Gorst—Sub-Departments of Finance—The Interior—Public Instruction—European and Egyptian officials 280

## CHAPTER XLI

### THE INTERNATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

Internationalism—1. THE COMMISSION OF THE PUBLIC DEBT—Functions of the Commission—The Egyptian Accounts—The Reserve Fund—Uselessness of the Commission—2. THE RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION—3. THE DAIRA SANIEH—4. THE DOMAINS ADMINISTRATION . . . . . . 301

## CHAPTER XLII

### THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The Mixed Courts—Nubar Pasha's objects in creating them—Attributes and composition of the Mixed Courts—Defects in the institution—The Consular Courts—The Native Tribunals and the Kadi's Courts—Summary of jurisdictions in Egypt . 316

## CHAPTER XLIII

### THE WORKERS OF THE MACHINE

Importance of persons rather than of systems—The British Consul-General—Tewfik Pasha—The Prime Ministers—Chérif Pasha—Nubar Pasha—Riaz Pasha—Mustapha Pasha Fehmi . 321

## PART V

## BRITISH POLICY IN EGYPT

### CHAPTER XLIV

### The Struggle for a Policy

1882–1883

PAGE

Intentions of the British Government — Proposal to reduce the garrison—Sir Edward Malet's opinion—Difficulty of combining reform and evacuation—I recommend reduction and concentration at Alexandria—The Government approve of this recommendation—The reduction is countermanded . . . 349

Appendix.—Despatch from Sir Evelyn Baring to Earl Granville, dated October 9, 1883 . . . . . . 362

### CHAPTER XLV

### The Northbrook Mission

September–November 1884

It is decided to send a Special Commissioner to Cairo—The policy of reporting—Lord Northbrook arrives in Egypt—His financial proposals—His General Report—The Government reject his proposals . . . . . . . . . 366

### CHAPTER XLVI

### The Wolff Convention

August 1885–October 1887

Sir Henry Wolff appointed Special Commissioner—Convention of October 24, 1885—Moukhtar Pasha—Convention of May 22, 1887—Comparison of the two Conventions—Frontier affairs—The army—Civil reforms—Evacuation—France and Russia oppose the Convention—The Sultan refuses to ratify it—Moukhtar Pasha permanently located in Egypt—Results of the Wolff mission . . . . . . . . 372

### CHAPTER XLVII

### The Neutralisation of the Suez Canal

Neutralisation of Egypt—Neutralisation of the Canal—The word neutrality—Circular of January 3, 1883—The Suez Canal Com-

PAGE

mission of 1885—The Commission dissolved—The Wolff Convention—Signature of the Canal Convention—Its application . 382

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### THE ANGLO-FRENCH AGREEMENT OF 1904

Apparent insolubility of the Egyptian question—Gradual change in public opinion—Statement of Lord Ellenborough—The business of diplomacy—The main facts of the problem—The events of 1904—Morocco—Signature of the Anglo-French Agreement—Remarks on the Agreement . . . . . 388

# PART VI

# THE REFORMS

## CHAPTER XLIX

### THE COURBASH

Universal use of the courbash—Lord Dufferin's Circular—It was partially inoperative—Final abolition of the courbash . . 397

## CHAPTER L

### THE CORVÉE

Connection between the courbash and the corvée — Merits and demerits of the corvée system—The corvée law—Dredging the canals—Proposed reduction of the land-tax—Proposal to abolish the corvée instead of reducing the land-tax—The Powers object—Action of the British Government—The corvée is not called out—A Decree is issued partially abolishing the corvée—Final settlement of the question in 1892 . . . . 406

## CHAPTER LI

### CORRUPTION

Universality of corruption—Steps taken to arrest it—Example of British officials—Diminution of corrupt practices . . 420

## CHAPTER LII

### EUROPEAN PRIVILEGE

PAGE

Origin of the Capitulations—Difference between Turkey and Egypt—Abuse of the Capitulations—*Raison d'être* of European privilege—Anomaly of the British position—Impossibility of arriving at any general solution—Minor changes—The right to enact by-laws—The House Tax—The Professional Tax—Proposal to create a local legislature—Internationalism . . . 426

## CHAPTER LIII

### FINANCE

The first bankruptcy of Egypt—Risk of a second bankruptcy—The Race against bankruptcy—The era of reform—Fiscal relief—Reduction of taxation—Increase of revenue—Expenditure—Aggregate surplus since 1888—The indebtedness of the fellaheen—Distribution of land—Importance of the financial question . . . . . . . . 443

## CHAPTER LIV

### IRRIGATION

Nature's bounty to Egypt—The work of the Pharaohs—Turkish neglect—Progress under British guidance—Programme of the future—Causes of the progress—Qualifications of the officers selected — Absence of international obstruction — Loan of £1,800,000—Support of the public—Importance of the work . 456

## CHAPTER LV

### THE ARMY

Disbandment of the army in 1882—History of the army—Mehemet Ali's Syrian campaigns—Ismail Pasha—The Abyssinian campaign—Tel-el-Kebir—It is decided to form a fellaheen army officered by Englishmen—The black battalions—Will the army fight?—Reasons why the reorganisation has been successfully conducted . . . . . . . . . 466

## CHAPTER LVI

### The Interior

PAGE

Uncertainty of British policy—Difficulties of administrative reform—Lord Dufferin's Police proposals—Mr. Clifford Lloyd—Changes made in the Police organisation—Nubar Pasha's conflict with Mr. Clifford Lloyd—The latter resigns—Friction in the Interior—Appointment of an Adviser—And of Inspectors—Difficulties of the present moment . . . . 478

## CHAPTER LVII

### Sub-Departments of the Interior

1. Prisons—State of the prisons in 1882—Reform—2. Slavery—The Slave Trade and slavery—The Convention of 1877—The Slave Home—Change of opinion in Egypt—Success of the Convention—3. Medical and Sanitary Administration—Egyptian superstitions—Clot Bey—State of things in 1883—Improvements effected—Sanitary reform—Impediments to progress—Treatment of epidemics . . . . 491

## CHAPTER LVIII

### Justice

Sir Edward Malet's opinion—The Mixed and Consular Courts—The Kadis' Courts—The Native Tribunals—Justice prior to 1883—The French system taken as a model—The judicial machinery—Reforms instituted by Sir John Scott and Sir Malcolm McIlwraith—Opposition to these reforms—The personnel of the Courts—Result of the reforms . . . 514

## CHAPTER LIX

### Education

Educational policy—Obstacles to progress—Want of money—The Pashas—Intellectual awakening of Egypt—The Mosque schools—Primary and Secondary education—Progress made in forming the characters of the Egyptians—Female education . . 524

## CHAPTER LX

### THE SOUDAN

PAGE

The nature of the Soudan problem—Extent—Population—Results obtained by the Convention of 1899—Executive agency—Finance—Railways—Slavery . . . . . 543

## CHAPTER LXI

### CONCLUSION

Summary of this work—Changes since the time of Ismail—The British reformers—Their Egyptian allies—Stability of the reforms . . . . . . . . 555

# PART VII

# THE FUTURE OF EGYPT

## CHAPTER LXII

### THE FUTURE OF EGYPT

*Quo Vadis?*—The question of the occupation—Its duration—Egyptian autonomy—The Capitulations—Desirability of training the Egyptians—Importance of finance—Display of sympathy—Conclusion . . . . . . 563

## APPENDIX

Khedives of Egypt—British Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs—British Agents and Consuls-General in Egypt—Chronological Table of Events . . . . . . . 573

INDEX . . . . . . . . 585

# PART III (*Continued*)

# THE SOUDAN

## 1882–1907

# CHAPTER XXVIII

## THE FALL OF KHARTOUM

### October 5, 1884–January 26, 1885

Murder of Colonel Stewart—Difficulties of the Expedition—News from General Gordon—Occupation of Jakdul—The battle of Abu Klea—Death of Sir Herbert Stewart—The column reaches the Nile—Two steamers leave for Khartoum—They arrive too late—Events at Khartoum—General Gordon's character—Capitulation of Omdurman—General Gordon's death—Effect on public opinion.

It is not within the scope of this work to write a detailed history of the military operations which took place in the Soudan. Those operations have been recorded by others who are more competent than myself to deal with military matters. I propose, therefore, as in the case of the Egyptian campaign of 1882, merely to give a brief summary of the chief events connected with the Nile Campaign of 1884-85.

Scarcely had the campaign commenced, when news arrived that Colonel Stewart had been killed. On September 10, he left Khartoum in a steamer accompanied by Mr. Power, M. Herbin, the French Consul, and about forty others. Colonel Stewart had been instructed by General Gordon to inform the various authorities concerned of the true nature of the situation at Khartoum. Berber and Abu Hamed were passed in safety, and it was thought that the main difficulties of the voyage had been overcome, when, on the 18th, the steamer struck on a rock near the village of Hebbah, some sixty miles below Abu Hamed. The boat was hopelessly disabled. Colonel Stewart and his companions landed, and were subsequently induced to lay aside their arms and enter a house in the village, where they were treacherously murdered by Suleiman Wad Gamr, the Sheikh of the Monasir tribe. It is singular that Colonel Stewart, who must have known the treacherous character of the Bedouins, should have fallen into the trap which was laid for him. The explanation has probably been afforded by General Gordon, who said that Colonel Stewart "was not a bit suspicious."[1]

I have frequently in the course of this narrative alluded to Colonel Stewart's high character, judgment, and ability. I can only repeat that by his premature death the Queen and the British nation lost a most capable public servant. A more gallant fellow never lived.

The Nile expedition, Colonel Colville says,[2] "was a campaign less against man than against time. Had British soldiers and Egyptian camels been able to subsist on sand and occasional water, or had the desert produced beef and biscuit, the army might, in spite of its late start, have reached Khartoum in November." The difficulties of supply and transport were, in fact, very great.

---

[1] *Journal*, p. 281. The whole of this passage is worth quoting, as it shows what a singularly accurate forecast General Gordon made of the manner in which Colonel Stewart had been murdered, before he had learnt any of the details. "I feel somehow," General Gordon wrote on November 5, "convinced they were captured by treachery—the Arabs pretending to be friendly—and surprising them at night. I will own that, without reason (apparently, for the chorus was that the *trip was safe*), I have never been comfortable since they left. Stewart was a man who did not chew the cud, he never thought of danger in perspective; he was not a bit suspicious (while I am made up of it). I can see in imagination the whole scene, the Sheikh inviting them to land, saying, 'Thank God, the Mahdi is a liar,'—bringing in wood—men going on shore and dispersed. The *Abbas* with her steam down, then a rush of wild Arabs, and all is over!"

[2] *History of the Soudan Campaign*, p. 61.

But British energy and perseverance overcame them. By the end of December, Lord Wolseley was ready to move from Korti across the desert to Metemmeh. News had been received that supplies were running short at Khartoum, and it was clear that, if General Gordon was to be saved, not a day would have to be lost in establishing communications with him. It was resolved to divide the British force into two portions. One division, under Sir Herbert Stewart, was to take the desert route. The other, under General Earle, was to follow the course of the Nile with a view ultimately to the capture of Berber, which General Gordon had warned Lord Wolseley "not to leave in his rear."

On December 30, the day on which Sir Herbert Stewart left Korti, a messenger arrived with a piece of paper the size of a postage stamp, on which was written, "Khartoum all right. 14.12.84. C. G. Gordon." This was in General Gordon's handwriting, and his seal was affixed to the back of the document. The letter was, however, accompanied by a verbal message from General Gordon which showed the straits to which he was reduced. "Our troops," he said, "at Khartoum are suffering from lack of provisions. The food we still have is little, some grain and biscuit. We want you to come quickly. . . . In Khartoum there is no butter, no dates, little meat. All food is very dear."

The force which left Korti at 3 P.M. on December 30, under the command of Sir Herbert Stewart, consisted of about 1100 British officers and men, and 2200 camels. It reached the wells of Jakdul, ninety-eight miles distant, early on the morning of January 2. A garrison of 422 men was left there with instructions to rig up pumps and otherwise improve the water-supply. On the evening of the 2nd, Sir Herbert Stewart left with the remainder of the force, and reached Korti at noon on the 5th.

On the 8th, he again started from Korti with the main body of the desert column, consisting of about 1600 effective British troops, some 300 camp-followers, and about 2400 camels and horses. His orders were to advance and occupy Metemmeh, to leave a strong detachment there, and then to return to Jakdul. Sir Charles Wilson accompanied the column, and, after the occupation of Metemmeh, was to proceed to Khartoum at once with a small detachment of infantry on board the steamers which, it was known, were in the neighbourhood. The column reached Jakdul early on the morning of the 12th. After halting for a day, the march was resumed. On the night of the 16th, the force bivouacked about three and a half miles from the wells of Abu Klea, which were occupied in considerable force by the Dervishes.

On the following morning (the 17th), the force advanced in square to attack the enemy. A desperate engagement ensued. The Dervishes charged the square with the utmost gallantry, and succeeded in penetrating a gap which had been temporarily caused in its rear face. The camels, Colonel Colville says, "which up to this time had been a source of weakness to the square, now became a source of strength. The spearmen by weight of numbers forced back the rear face of the square on to the camels; these formed a living traverse that broke the rush, and gave time for the right face and front face to take advantage of finding themselves on higher ground, and to fire over the heads of those engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle on to the mass of the enemy behind. A desperate conflict ensued in the centre of the square, but the slaughter caused by the musketry from the rising ground caused the rearward Arabs to waver and then to fall back. Within the square. the din of battle was such that no words of command could be heard, and each man was obliged to act on the impulse of the moment. Officers and men alike fought well in this short hand-to-hand encounter, and many acts of heroism were performed. . . . Before five minutes had elapsed, the little band of less than 1500 British soldiers had, by sheer pluck and muscle, killed the last of the fanatics who had penetrated into their midst."

The victory was complete, but it had been dearly bought. Eighteen officers and 150 non-commissioned officers and men were killed and wounded. The enemy's loss was heavy; 1100 bodies were counted in the immediate proximity of the square, and the number of wounded is said to have been very great. On the night of the 17th, the troops bivouacked at the Abu Klea wells. The baggage animals did not arrive till early on the morning of the 18th. The result was that the troops passed the night without food, coats, or blankets.

Sir Herbert Stewart then determined to make a night march to Metemmeh, about twenty-three miles distant. At 4 P.M. on the 18th, the column left Abu Klea. The night was dark. Many of the men had been without sleep for two nights. The camels were exhausted. The route lay for a considerable distance through thick bush. Halts were numerous. At last, after a toilsome march of some sixteen hours, the Nile appeared in sight. It was, however, apparent that the river could not be reached without further fighting. Whilst preparations were being made for an advance, the Dervishes kept up a hot fire from the long grass in which they were concealed. It was at this moment that the gallant Stewart received his death-wound. Colonel Burnaby, who it had been intended by Lord Wolseley should succeed Sir Herbert Stewart in the event of the latter's death, had been killed at Abu Klea. The chief command devolved on Sir Charles Wilson.

At 3 P.M. on the 19th, the force advanced in square, and after a sharp engagement, in which an attack of the Dervishes was successfully repulsed, occupied a position on the Nile a short distance north of Metemmeh. The British loss on this day was 9 officers and 102 non-commissioned officers and men killed and wounded.

On the following morning (the 20th), the force moved to Gubat. At 10 A.M. on the 21st, four steamers, which had been sent by General Gordon, arrived from Khartoum. They brought his Journal and several letters, in one of which, dated December 14, he said that he expected a catastrophe in the town after ten days' time. The latest news was written on a small scrap of paper. It was to the following effect: "Khartoum is all right. Could hold out for years. C. G. Gordon. 29.12.84." It was known at the time that General Gordon wrote this so that, in the event of his letter falling into the hands of the Dervishes, they would be deceived. In reality, he was in the greatest straits. Obviously, the next thing to do was to send the steamers back to Khartoum with some soldiers on board of them. It was not, however, until the morning of the 24th that two steamers, the *Bordein* and the *Telahawiyeh*, left. The interval between the 21st and the 24th was occupied in reconnaissances both up and down the river, and in making arrangements for the proper protection of the force at Gubat.[1]

Both the steamers carried small detachments of British soldiers, as well as larger detachments of Soudanese troops. Sir Charles Wilson embarked on board the *Bordein.* All went well until, at 6 P.M. on the 25th, the *Bordein* struck on a rock in the Sixth Cataract, the navigation of which is intricate. This caused a delay of twenty-four hours. On the night of the 26th, the steamers were only three miles nearer Khartoum than they had been on the previous evening. An early start was made on the 27th. The dangerous gorge of Shabluka was passed without difficulty. The steamers continued their voyage under a musketry fire from the banks, and in the evening stopped near the small village of Tamaniat. During the afternoon, a man on the bank called out that Khartoum had fallen and that General Gordon had been killed, but he was not believed by those on board. The steamers started early on the 28th, hoping to reach Khartoum by the evening. They advanced under a heavy fire of musketry and artillery until they came within sight of the Government House at Khartoum. An eager search was made through glasses to see whether the Egyptian flag was still flying. No sign of it could be discovered. More than this, as the steamers advanced it was seen that Government House and the buildings near it had been wrecked. The Khartoum side of the White Nile was in the possession of the enemy. It was clear that the indomitable defender of Khartoum had at last succumbed. The expedition had arrived too late. Sir Charles Wilson ordered the steamers to be put about and to run down stream. On the return journey, both the steamers were wrecked, but those on board were rescued from the perilous position, in which they were at one time placed, by a party sent out in the steamer *Safieh* under Lord Charles Beresford. On the afternoon of February 4, Sir Charles Wilson and his companions rejoined the main body of the British troops, which were encamped at Gubat.

---

[1] The delay at Gubat has formed the subject of much discussion. The conclusion at which I have arrived, after a careful examination of all the facts, is that if the steamers had left Gubat on the afternoon of the 21st, they would probably have arrived at Khartoum in time to save the town.

It is now time to go back to the events which were passing in Khartoum.

In the course of this narrative, I have alluded to General Gordon's numerous inconsistencies. I have pointed out errors of judgment with which he may justly be charged. I have dwelt on defects of character which unsuited him for the conduct of political affairs. But, when all this has been said, how grandly the character of the man comes out in the final scene of the Soudan tragedy. History has recorded few incidents more calculated to strike the imagination than that presented by this brave man, who, strong in the faith which sustained him, stood undismayed amidst dangers which might well have appalled the stoutest heart. Hordes of savage fanatics surged around him. Shot and shell poured into the town which he was defending against fearful odds. Starvation stared him in the face. "The soldiers had to eat dogs, donkeys, skins of animals, gum and palm fibre, and famine prevailed. The soldiers stood on the fortifications like pieces of wood. The civilians were even worse off. Many died of hunger, and corpses filled the streets—no one had even the energy to bury them."[1] Treachery and internal dissension threatened him from within, whilst a waste of burning African desert separated him from the outward help which his countrymen, albeit tardily, were straining every nerve to afford. "All the anxiety he had undergone had gradually turned his hair to silvery white."[2] "Yet," said an eye-witness, "in spite of all this danger by which he was surrounded, Gordon Pasha had no fear." "Go," he said, "tell all the people in Khartoum that Gordon fears nothing, for God has created him without fear."[3] Nor was this an idle boast.

---

[1] Account given by Bordeini Bey, *Mahdiism, etc.*, p. 166.

[2] *Mahdiism, etc.*, p. 169.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 164.

General Gordon did not know what the word fear meant. Death had no terrors for him. "I would," he wrote to his sister, "that all could look on death as a cheerful friend, who takes us from a world of trial to our true home."[1] Many a man before General Gordon has laid down his life at the call of duty. Many a man too has striven to regard death as a glad relief from pain, sorrow, and suffering. But no soldier about to lead a forlorn hope, no Christian martyr tied to the stake or thrown to the wild beasts of Ancient Rome, ever faced death with more unconcern than General Gordon. His faith was sublime. Strong in that faith, he could meet the savage who plunged a spear into his breast with a "gesture of scorn,"[2] and with the sure and certain hope of immortality which had been promised to him by the Master in whose footsteps he had endeavoured to follow.

From a military point of view, the defence of Khartoum was a splendid feat of arms. When Ismail Pasha tried to use General Gordon as a pawn on his financial and political chessboard, kindly laughter was provoked from all who knew the facts or who knew the man. General Gordon was too rash and impulsive for the conduct of political affairs in this work-a-day world. But as the military defender of a beleaguered city, he was in his element. The fighting instinct, which was strong within him, had full scope for action. His example and precept, his bravery and resource, encouraged the faint-hearted and enabled him, even with the poor material of which he disposed, to keep a formidable enemy at bay for ten long months. His personal influence was felt by all the inhabitants of the town, who regarded him as their sole refuge in distress, their only bulwark against disaster.

---

[1] *Letters, etc.*, p. xii.

[2] *Mahdiism, etc.*, p. 171.

To return to the narrative. After the defeat of El Eilafun on September 1, the position at Khartoum became well-nigh desperate. All the tribes in the neighbourhood submitted to the Mahdi and hurried to Khartoum to take part in the siege. "They fired projectiles from the guns, rockets, and firearms of all descriptions, which fell on the town from all sides. From time to time, the troops made sorties out of the city to drive them off, but almost each time their efforts proved fruitless, and they had to return to the garrison, for the projectiles of the rebels were numerous." On January 5, 1885, Omdurman capitulated. "Khartoum then fell into a dangerous state. The rebels surrounded it from all sides, and cut off all supplies. . . . The soldiers suffered terribly from want of food; some of them deserted and joined the rebels. Gordon Pasha used to say every day, 'They [the English] must come to-morrow,' but they never came, and we began to think that they must have been defeated after all. . . . We all became heart-broken, and concluded that no army was coming to relieve Khartoum." The townspeople began to talk of capitulation. General Gordon appealed to them, on January 25, to make a determined stand for another twenty-four hours, by which time he thought that the English relief would arrive. "What more can I say?" were his words to Bordeini Bey. "The people will no longer believe me. I have told them over and over again that help would be here, but it has never come, and now they must see I tell them lies. If this, my last promise, fails, I can do nothing more. Go and collect all the people you can on the lines and make a good stand. Now leave me to smoke these cigarettes."

The end was very near. Early on the morning of January 26, by which time Sir Charles Wilson's steamers had reached the foot of the

Sixth Cataract, the Dervishes made a general attack on the lines and met with but a feeble resistance from the half-starved and disheartened soldiers. Farag Pasha, the commandant, who was suspected of treachery, escaped to the Mahdist camp, and met his death a short time afterwards at the hands of an Arab with whom he had a blood feud. The Palace was soon reached. General Gordon stood in front of the entrance to his office. He had on a white uniform. His sword was girt around him, but he did not draw it. He carried a revolver in his right hand, but he disdained to use it. The final scene, in which the civilised Christian faced barbarous and triumphant fanaticism, is thus described by Bordeini Bey, and it would be difficult, whether in tales of fact or of fiction, to find a more pathetic, or, it may be added, a more dramatic passage: "Taha Shahin was the first to encounter Gordon beside the door of the Divan, apparently waiting for the Arabs and standing with a calm and dignified manner, his left hand resting on the hilt of his sword. Shahin, dashing forward with the curse, '*Malaoun, el-yom yomak*' (O cursed one, your time is come!), plunged his spear into his body.[1] Gordon, it is said, made a gesture of scorn with his right hand and turned his back, when he received another spear-wound, which caused him to fall forward, and was most likely his mortal wound. The other three men closely following Shahin then rushed in, and cutting at the prostrate body with their swords, must have killed him in a few seconds. His death occurred just before sunrise. He made no resistance, and did not fire a shot from his revolver. From all I know, I am convinced that he never intended to surrender. I should say that he must have intended to use his revolver only if he saw it was the intention of the Arabs to take him prisoner alive; but he saw such crowds rushing on him with swords and spears, and there being no important Emirs with them, he must have known that they did not intend to spare him, and that was most likely what he wanted; besides, if he had fired, it could only have delayed his death a few moments, the wild fanatical Arabs would never have been checked by a few shots from a revolver. Gordon Pasha's head was immediately cut off and sent to the Mahdi at Omdurman, while his body was dragged downstairs and left exposed for a time in the garden, where many came to plunge their spears into it."[1]

---

[1] From information subsequently obtained, it would appear that General Gordon received his death-blow, not from Taha Shahin, as stated above, but from Sheikh Mohammed Nebawi, who was eventually killed at the battle of Omdurman.

Foul creatures were not wanting to kick the dead lion. Bordeini Bey goes on to say: "I saw Gordon Pasha's head exposed in Omdurman. It was fixed between the branches of a tree, and all who passed by threw stones at it. The first to throw a stone was Youssuf Mansour, late Mamour of Police at El Obeid, whom Gordon Pasha had dismissed for misconduct, and who afterwards commanded the Mahdi's artillery."

Thus General Gordon died. Well do I remember the blank feeling of grief and disappointment with which I received the news of his death, and even now, at this distance of time, I cannot pen the record of those last sad days at Khartoum without emotion. If any consolation can be offered to those who strove, but strove in vain, to save him, it is to be found in the fact that it may be said of General Gordon, perhaps more than of any man, that he was *felix opportunitate mortis*.

---

[1] The best evidence obtainable goes to prove that Bordeini Bey's account of General Gordon's death is substantially correct. It differs, however, in many important particulars from the account given by M. Neufeld in chap. xxv. of *A Prisoner of the Khalifa*.

Could we but choose our time and choose aright,
'Tis best to die, our honour at the height,
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But served our friends, and well secured our fame.
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose;
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief.

Dryden's lines may well serve as General Gordon's epitaph. He died in the plenitude of his reputation, and left a name which will be revered so long as the qualities of steadfast faith and indomitable courage have any hold on the feelings of mankind.

Rarely has public opinion in England been so deeply moved as when the news arrived of the fall of Khartoum. The daily movements of the relief expedition had been watched by anxious multitudes of General Gordon's countrymen, yearning for news of one who seemed to embody in his own person the peculiar form of heroism which is perhaps most of all calculated to move the Anglo-Saxon race. When General Gordon's fate was known a wail of sorrow and disappointment was heard throughout the land. The Queen's feelings, as a Sovereign and as a woman of lively sympathies, were touched to the quick. Her Majesty wrote a sympathetic letter to Miss Gordon, deeply lamenting her "dear brother's cruel, though heroic fate." On this, as on other occasions, the Queen's language truly represented the feelings of the nation.[1] Yet the

---

[1] On March 19, 1885, Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's Private Secretary, wrote to me: "I now quite admit that I did not understand Gordon, that I did not see what you did, the force and reality of his position and requirements. The Government were to blame in not understanding this also, but I think we all here—the people, high and low—should share the responsibility, for we did not grasp the situation as we should have done. The Queen was in a terrible state about the fall of Khartoum, and indeed it had a good deal to do with making her ill. She was just going out when she got the telegram, and sent for

British nation had done its duty. Parliament voted supplies in no grudging spirit to enable an expedition to be sent to General Gordon's relief, and public opinion ratified the vote. The British army also sustained its ancient reputation. Mistakes may have been, and, indeed, were made. But whatever judgment may be pronounced by competent critics in connection with some points of detail, the true reasons for the failure must be sought elsewhere. They are thus stated by Sir Reginald Wingate: "To innumerable enemies, flushed with victory and ardent fanaticism, Gordon exposed a skill and experience in savage warfare which few could equal. Ill-provisioned in a place naturally and artificially weak, Gordon for months preserved an undaunted front. Neither treachery in the besieged nor the stratagems of the besiegers caused the fall of Khartoum. The town fell through starvation, and despair at long neglect. There were no elements of chance in the expedition to relieve General Gordon. It was sanctioned too late. As day by day no English came, so day by day the soldiers' hearts sank deeper and deeper into gloom. As day by day their strength wasted, so that finally gum, their only food, was rejected, so day by day the Nile ebbed back from the ditch it had filled with mud, and from the rampart it had crumbled, and left a broad path for who should dare to enter."[1]

---

me. She then went out to my cottage, a quarter of a mile off, walked into the room, pale and trembling, and said to my wife, who was terrified at her appearance—'Too late!'"

Throughout the whole of this difficult period, I received the utmost support from the Queen. On March 13, 1885, the following note, written by Her Majesty, was communicated to me by my brother (Mr. Edward Baring, subsequently Lord Revelstoke): "The concluding paragraph of Sir E. Baring's telegram" (I am not quite sure to what particular telegram allusion is here made) "is *admirable.* Let the Queen have a copy. She wishes Mary" (Lady Ponsonby, who was Lady Revelstoke's sister) "would tell Mr. Edward Baring that the Queen has endorsed everything his brother has said."

[1] *Mahdiism, etc.*, p. 156.

In a word, the Nile expedition was sanctioned too late, and the reason why it was sanctioned too late was that Mr. Gladstone would not accept simple evidence of a plain fact, which was patent to much less powerful intellects than his own. Posterity has yet to decide on the services which Mr. Gladstone, during his long and brilliant career, rendered in other directions to the British nation, but it is improbable that the verdict of his contemporaries in respect to his conduct of the affairs of the Soudan will ever be reversed. That verdict has been distinctly unfavourable. "Les fautes de l'homme puissant," said an eminent Frenchman,[1] "sont des malheurs publics." Mr. Gladstone's error of judgment in delaying too long the despatch of the Nile expedition left a stain on the reputation of England which it will be beyond the power of either the impartial historian or the partial apologist to efface.

---

[1] Senancour.

# CHAPTER XXIX

## THE EVACUATION OF THE SOUDAN

JANUARY 26, 1885–DECEMBER 30, 1886

Lord Wolseley urges the necessity of an autumn campaign—The Government hesitate—And then agree—Sir Redvers Buller retreats to Korti—Battle of Kirbekan—The movement on Berber arrested—Operations at Suakin—Action at Hashin—And at Tofrik—Suspension of the Suakin operations—The autumn campaign abandoned—Question of holding Dongola—Change of Government in England—Evacuation of Dongola—Death of the Mahdi—Battle of Ginniss—Review of British policy.

WHEN Lord Wolseley heard of the battle of Abu Klea and of Sir Herbert Stewart having been wounded, he decided to send Sir Redvers Buller to take command of the desert column, and to reinforce it by two battalions. Shortly afterwards, news arrived of the fall of Khartoum. General Earle was ordered to arrest the forward movement of the river column on Abu Hamed. Pending the receipt of instructions from London as to the policy which was now to be pursued, a discretionary power was left to Sir Redvers Buller to act according to local circumstances. General Earle accordingly halted at Berti, about midway between Korti and Abu Hamed. Sir Redvers Buller arrived at Gubat on February 11. He found that there were only about twelve days' supplies at Gubat, and another twelve days' supplies at Abu Klea, whilst the camels were in a weak and emaciated condition. News had been received that a Dervish force of about 4000 men and six guns was on its way from Khartoum to Gubat. Sir Redvers Buller, therefore, wisely decided to fall back on Jakdul. The retreat began on February 14. Jakdul was reached on the 26th.

In the meanwhile, the British Government were in a position of great difficulty. The sole object of the expedition had been to bring General Gordon and Colonel Stewart away from Khartoum. This object had not been attained. Obviously, unless the policy of the Government was to undergo a complete change, the most logical course to have pursued would have been to desist from any further interference in the Soudan, to withdraw the British troops to some good strategical position in the valley of the Nile, and there to await the attack of the Mahdist forces. This was what was eventually done, and, judged by the light of after events it can scarcely be doubted that it would have been better if the Government had at once decided to take up a defensive attitude. It can, however, be no matter for surprise that, in the first instance, the Government decided otherwise. British public opinion was greatly excited. Both the nation and the army were smarting under a sense of failure. The soldiers were burning to avenge their comrades, and to show the Dervishes that they were no match for British troops. It was certain that the fall of Khartoum would increase the influence and prestige of the Mahdi; neither was it easy to foresee what might be the effect of his success in Egypt,[1] and amongst Mohammedans in other parts of the world.

---

[1] Directly the news of the fall of Khartoum reached Cairo on February 6, I telegraphed to Lord Granville as follows: "It is too early to express any opinion worth having as to the effect which the fall of Khartoum will produce in Egypt proper. Moreover, much will no doubt depend on the course which Her Majesty's Government now decide to pursue in the Soudan. But I may say that, so far as I can

General Gordon's fame was then at its zenith. His Journal, which had been received, and was immediately published, gave a clear indication of his views. He strongly advocated a policy of "smashing up" the Mahdi. The weight of Lord Wolseley's authority was thrown into the same scale. He deprecated the adoption of a defensive policy. "It must never be forgotten," he said, "that the question of whether this war shall or shall not go on does not rest with us, unless we are prepared to give up Egypt to the False Prophet. We shall not bring about a quiet state of affairs by adopting a defensive policy. The Mahdi has repeatedly declared it to be his full and settled intention to possess himself of Egypt, and his followers look upon themselves as engaged in a war the object of which is not to rest contented with the capture of Berber, but to drive the infidels into the sea." Lord Wolseley thought that the final struggle with Mahdiism might perhaps be staved off for a few years, but these years, he said, "will be years of trouble and disturbance for Egypt, of burdens and strains to our military resources, and the contest that will come in the end will be no less than that which is in front of us now. This is all we shall gain by a defensive policy." There could, he thought, be little difference of opinion as to the line of action which was "most befitting our national dignity and honour." The Mahdi must be crushed. That, Lord Wolseley thought, was the only policy, "worthy of the English nation."

These views were shared by others on the spot. The Government had, therefore, to face a strong

---

at present judge, I do not anticipate any disturbance so far as the Egyptian population is concerned. The effect produced upon the Bedouins on the frontier is more difficult to forecast, and it would be as well to be prepared to send at short notice another battalion to Assouan, as proposed some little while ago by Lord Wolseley."

body of local opinion favourable to offensive action. At first, the Ministers hesitated, and they might well do so, for they were asked to embark on a crusade against Mohammedan fanaticism, to adopt an adventurous policy of which no one could foresee the end, and to wage a costly war in a remote country under conditions of exceptional difficulty imposed by the climate, by the scantiness of local supplies, and by the absence of facilities for transport and locomotion. Lord Wolseley had warned them that "the strength and composition of his little army was calculated for the relief, not for the siege and capture of Khartoum, the two operations being entirely different in character and magnitude. . . . Khartoum in the hands of the enemy could not be retaken until the force under his command had been largely augmented in numbers and in artillery."

Lord Wolseley's first instructions, which were issued on February 6, were "to check the advance of the Mahdi in districts now undisturbed." "Whether," it was added, "it will be ultimately necessary to advance on Khartoum or not, cannot now be decided." I was at the same time told to give the Khedive general assurances of support, and to inform Lord Wolseley that it was the desire of the Cabinet "that if the Mahdi should make any proposals he should transmit them immediately to Her Majesty's Government for their consideration." The Mahdi never made any proposals, neither was there at this or any other time the smallest likelihood of his doing so. Lord Wolseley replied that Lord Hartington's telegram gave him "no information as to the policy with reference to the Soudan which Her Majesty's Government meant to pursue." Thus pressed, the Government yielded. On February 9, Lord Hartington telegraphed to Lord Wolseley: "Your military policy is to be based on the necessity, which we recognise on the statement of facts now before us, that the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum must be overthrown."

Unquestionably, it was a mistake to issue these orders. It is easy to see now that both General Gordon and Lord Wolseley credited the Mahdi with an amount of strength for offensive purposes which he was far from possessing. But this was not so clear then as it became later. Lord Wolseley, therefore, thanked Lord Hartington for his "explicit statement of policy," and added: "I am sure it is the correct one, as the Mahdi's power is incompatible with good government in Egypt."

The military arrangements necessary for giving effect to the policy of the Government had then to be settled. An immediate advance on Khartoum was out of the question. Time would be required for the necessary reinforcements to come from England. Moreover, the hot season was approaching. Lord Wolseley, therefore, determined to capture Berber and Abu Hamed by a combined movement of the forces under Sir Redvers Buller and General Earle, and to hold those places during the summer, preparatory to an advance on Khartoum during the ensuing cool season. At the same time, a force was to co-operate from Suakin with a view to keeping open the road to Berber. "The sooner," Lord Wolseley telegraphed to Lord Hartington, "you can now deal with Osman Digna the better."

Sir Redvers Buller was ordered, on February 10, to take Metemmeh "as soon as he felt himself strong enough to do so," and then to combine with General Earle in an attack on Berber. He received these instructions late on the night of the 13th, when he had already partly evacuated Gubat, and had made all the arrangements necessary for leaving it entirely at daylight on the following morning. For reasons which have been already given,[1] Sir Redvers Buller decided to continue the retrograde movement on Abu Klea. The course he adopted met subsequently with the approval of Lord Wolseley.

Orders were issued for the desert column to move on Merowi, but in the meanwhile it had become clear that it would be impossible to undertake operations such as those contemplated by Lord Wolseley. Sir Redvers Buller wrote several letters to Lord Wolseley from Jakdul in which "he not only drew attention to the fact that the transport of the desert column was completely exhausted, but further stated that the boots of the men were thoroughly worn out, and that many of them were almost shoeless." Sir Evelyn Wood, who was also at Jakdul, confirmed the views expressed by Sir Redvers Buller. "I do not think," he wrote on February 20, "that the debilitated state of our transport is realised at Korti." Manifestly, a retreat on Korti was imposed by the circumstances of the situation. Lord Wolseley's original plan, under which a combined movement of the river and desert columns was to be made on Berber, was no longer feasible. The last troops of the desert column arrived at Korti on March 16.

I now turn to the movements of the river column. Lord Wolseley's orders to halt reached General Earle on February 5. On the 8th, General Earle received orders to push on to Abu Hamed. These were supplemented later on the same day by orders to advance on Berber, and to co-operate with Sir Redvers Buller in the capture of that place. Shortly after leaving Berti, the enemy were found in force occupying a ridge called Jebel Kirbekan. On the 10th, they were attacked and driven from the position with heavy loss. The British loss was

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 18.

7 officers and 50 men killed and wounded. It was in this action that, to the great sorrow of all who knew him, General Earle lost his life. After his death, General Brackenbury assumed the command of the river column.

Subsequently to the action at Kirbekan, the forward movement was continued. On February 24, when the column was about thirty miles from Abu Hamed, General Brackenbury received a message from Lord Wolseley informing him of the retreat of the desert column. "I have," Lord Wolseley said, "abandoned all hope of going to Berber before the autumn campaign begins." General Brackenbury was, therefore, ordered to withdraw his force to Merowi. He arrived there on March 5.

It is now time to describe the operations in the vicinity of Suakin. Sir Gerald Graham was appointed to the chief command. His instructions were to make the best arrangements he could for "the destruction of the power of Osman Digna." When this had been done, he was to "arrange for the military occupation of the Hadendowa territory, lying near the Suakin-Berber road." He was further directed to do all in his power to facilitate the construction of the Suakin-Berber railway. A force of 13,000 men was placed at his disposal, consisting of British and British-Indian troops, and also of a battalion of infantry and a battery of artillery, which were lent by the Government of New South Wales.

By the middle of March, the force was ready for action, and Sir Gerald Graham proceeded to carry out the first portion of his instructions, namely, to crush Osman Digna. It was reported that the main body of the Dervishes, in number about 7000, occupied Tamai, whilst smaller bodies held Hashin and Handoub, all places lying within a few miles of Suakin. It was decided, in the first instance, to drive the enemy out of Hashin. This object was effected on March 20 and 21, with the loss of 1 officer and 44 non-commissioned officers and men killed and wounded. The force then returned to Suakin.

The next step was to crush the main Dervish force at Tamai. On March 22, a force under Sir John McNeill left Suakin. Sir John McNeill's orders were to establish an intermediate post between Suakin and Tamai. At 10.30 A.M. the troops halted at a spot named Tofrik, a few miles from Suakin, and proceeded to entrench themselves in a stockade. Whilst many of the men were scattered in the act of cutting brushwood, a sudden attack was made by a body of about 5000 Dervishes. A scene of great confusion ensued. Many of the Dervishes penetrated into the half-formed stockade. After twenty minutes of confused fighting, they were driven back with the loss of 1500 in killed besides many wounded, but the British force suffered severely. Fifteen officers and 278 non-commissioned officers and men were killed, wounded, or missing. The camp-followers suffered severely. Five hundred camels were killed or missing. Shortly after this engagement, Osman Digna withdrew his forces from Tamai, which was occupied by Sir Gerald Graham on April 3.

According to the terms of his original instructions, Sir Gerald Graham should now have turned his attention to opening up the route for the railway. On April 15, however, orders were issued from London to suspend the construction of the railway. Suakin was "to be held for the present, as also any position in the neighbourhood necessary for protection from constant attacks as last year."

Whilst the operations described above were going on, the policy of the British Government had undergone a complete change. In the middle of

February, Lord Wolseley wished to issue a Proclamation to the people of the Soudan to the effect that his mission was "to destroy utterly the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum."[1] The Government agreed to the issue of this Proclamation with a characteristic amendment, which was made at the instigation of Mr. Gladstone. It was stipulated that the word "utterly" should be omitted from the Proclamation. Two months later, the Government had decided to go farther than the omission of the word "utterly" from a Proclamation. The Mahdi was neither to be utterly destroyed nor, indeed, destroyed at all, but was to be left alone for the time being to rule undisturbed over the inhospitable deserts of the Soudan.

Many considerations contributed to bring about this change of policy, or perhaps it should rather be said, to bring about a return to the original policy of the Government, which in a moment of excitement had been too hastily abandoned. Public opinion in England, which had been violently excited when the news of the fall of Khartoum arrived, had somewhat calmed down. It had found its natural and constitutional safety-valve in the shape of an acrimonious debate in Parliament, resulting in a division in which the Government narrowly escaped defeat. The military operations subsequent to the fall of Khartoum had shown that any forward movement in the autumn would be a costly and difficult undertaking. The voices of politicians and diplomatists, which had at first been hushed by the clang of arms, began to be heard. The disadvantages of an offensive, and the advantages of a defensive policy became more and more clear as the matter was calmly considered. Further—and this exercised a very material influence on the views of the Government—affairs on the Indian frontier gave cause for anxiety.[1] It was, therefore, undesirable to engage in a campaign in the Soudan, which would in some degree cripple the military strength of the nation in the event of the services of the army being required elsewhere. The sound good sense of the British nation, which was well represented in the Gladstone Cabinet, reasserted itself, and a policy based upon a sober appreciation of national interests was eventually adopted.[2] On April 21, it was announced in both Houses of Parliament that it was not intended to advance on Khartoum or to undertake any further offensive operations in the Soudan. Lord Wolseley was instructed accordingly.

---

[1] This Proclamation, as it was originally drafted, consisted of short, crisp sentences, with somewhat of a Napoleonic ring about them, which, it was supposed, would create a deep impression on the people of the Soudan. I gave it to a talented Egyptian friend of mine, after it had been translated into Arabic, and asked him to give me his opinion upon it. He said that he thoroughly understood what was meant, but that to the Soudanese the Proclamation would be quite incomprehensible. At my request, he prepared a counter project conveying the same ideas in different language. It was an extremely eloquent document, and reminded me, more especially in its vituperative passages, of a chapter in Isaiah.

The question then arose whether the British and Egyptian troops should continue to hold Dongola, or whether they should fall back to some more northerly point along the valley of the Nile.

Lord Wolseley's opinions were expressed immediately after the Government had decided to abandon the idea of an autumn campaign against the Mahdi. "If," he telegraphed to Lord Hartington on April 14, "our position is to be exclusively one of defence, I would hold Wadi Halfa and Korosko as outposts, with a strong brigade at Assouan." The next day he added: "Hold on to Dongola province. As long as you do this, you prevent Mahdiism spreading in Egypt, secure allegiance of frontier tribes, and save henceforth trouble, disturbances, and possibly local risings, which a policy of retreat will probably entail, and which will necessitate increased garrisons in Egypt and military occupation of the larger towns."

---

[1] The news that General Komaroff had attacked and defeated the Afghans at Penjdeh reached London on April 10.

[2] On April 3, I wrote a private letter to Lord Granville in which, after dwelling on the ambiguity of Mr. Gladstone's statements in the House of Commons, I urged the necessity of facing the facts and of laying down some definite Soudan policy for the future. I concluded in the following words: "The main question which I have propounded in this letter is as follows:—Do the English Government intend to establish a settled form of government at Khartoum or not? My own opinion is that this question should be answered in the negative. Hence, I am of opinion that the military decision to advance to Khartoum should be reversed and that no such advance should take place."

Sir Redvers Buller, Sir Charles Wilson, and Colonel Kitchener were asked their opinions. They all deprecated a retreat from Dongola, but it was clear that their reason for doing so was that they wished to revert to the policy of advancing on Khartoum. "The Soudan," Sir Redvers Buller said, "will never be quiet till the Mahdi is disposed of." "I still believe," Sir Charles Wilson said, "as always, that the control of the Soudan is necessary to Egypt." "The Mahdi must advance or disappear," Colonel Kitchener said, "and I deprecate leaving him this fresh lease of life and power."

I did not agree in the view that Dongola should be held with the intention of advancing on Khartoum. At the same time, I was fearful of the political effect which might be produced in Egypt if an immediate retreat were carried out. I did not like letting the Dervishes come so far down the Nile valley as Wadi Halfa. I was inclined to adopt a proposal put forward by Sir Charles Wilson, to the effect that Dongola should be held until some black troops could be organised, and that the government should be entrusted to

Abdul-Kader Pasha. "I would earnestly impress," I said, "upon Her Majesty's Government that it would be neither politically wise nor dignified to carry out at once the policy of retreat from Dongola and the immediate neighbourhood." The Government, however, held firmly to their original opinions. On May 8, Lord Hartington telegraphed to Lord Wolseley: "The Government, after considering all reports received, adhere to the decision to adopt the proposal for the defence of the Egyptian frontier at Wadi Halfa and Assouan contained in your telegram of April 14."

Whilst measures were being taken to carry out these instructions, a change of Government took place in England. On June 24, 1885, the Ministry of Lord Salisbury succeeded that of Mr. Gladstone. Lord Wolseley urged the new Government to abandon a defensive and to adopt an offensive policy. "No frontier force," he said, "can keep Mahdiism out of Egypt, and the Mahdi sooner or later must be smashed, or he will smash you. . . . To advance on Khartoum and discredit the Mahdi by a serious defeat on his own ground would certainly finish him." After a short interval, Lord Wolseley was informed that the new Government adhered to the decision which had been taken by their predecessors. The retreat was to be continued.

There can be little doubt that the British Government acted wisely in deciding to retreat from Dongola. The views of the military authorities were based on the presumed political necessity of "smashing the Mahdi" at Khartoum. No such necessity existed in reality. It is possible that the policy, which I recommended, of setting up an Egyptian semi-independent Governor at Dongola might have succeeded, if British troops had been allowed to remain long enough to enable a black force to be organised, but I am glad that the experiment was not tried. Indeed, had I at the time thoroughly appreciated the physical features of the country between Wadi Halfa and Dongola, I do not think I should have made the proposal. In the autumn of 1889, I visited Wadi Halfa and went as far as Sarras, about thirty miles south of that place. I saw enough to convince myself that, as an advanced position, Wadi Halfa is far stronger than Dongola.

On July 5, the British troops evacuated Dongola. In view, however, of the threatening attitude of the Dervishes, the movement northwards took place slowly. The Mahdi died suddenly on June 20, and his death exercised a dispiriting effect on his followers. His place was taken by the Khalifa Abdullah - el - Taashi, who proceeded to carry out his predecessor's intention of invading Egypt. It was not, however, till December 30, 1885, that a mixed British and Egyptian force, under the command of Sir Frederick Stephenson, met the Dervishes at Ginniss, about midway between Wadi Halfa and Dongola. The Dervishes were defeated with a loss of about 800 killed and wounded. The British and Egyptian loss was 41 killed and wounded. This action inflicted a severe blow on the Khalifa, and for the time being allayed all fear of a serious invasion of Egypt by the Dervishes. By April 13, 1886, the British and Egyptian troops were concentrated at Wadi Halfa. Wadi Halfa was then left to the care of the Egyptian troops, and the British force retired to Assouan, which place they reached on May 7.

With the action at Ginniss, purely British intervention in the affairs of the Soudan may be said practically to have ceased for the time being. The moment, therefore, is opportune for reviewing the results attained by British policy during the previous two years. My own belief is that the fundamental principles of that policy were sound, if once the fatal mistake of non-interference prior to the Hicks defeat be condoned. If a veto had been placed on the Hicks expedition, the probability is that the Egyptian Government would never have lost possession of Khartoum.

When once General Hicks's army had been destroyed, the policy of withdrawal was enforced by the circumstances of the situation. The British Ministers wisely set their faces against reconquest by British arms. They obliged the Egyptian Government to look the facts in the face, and in doing so they rendered a great service to the Khedive and to the Egyptian people.

But although the fundamental principles of British policy were, with the reserve stated above, perfectly sound, the execution of the policy was defective. At almost every point, failure was incurred.

The British Government endeavoured to assist the Egyptian Government in effecting the peaceable withdrawal of the garrisons and Egyptian civil population from the Soudan. The withdrawal was for the most part never effected at all. Sir Reginald Wingate estimated[1] that the total garrisons in the Soudan, including General Hicks's army and the force sent under General Baker to Suakin, amounted to about 55,000 men. Of these, about 12,000 were killed. 11,000 eventually returned to Egypt, leaving about 30,000 who remained in the Soudan. This figure is exclusive of civilians, women, and children, the number of whom Sir Reginald Wingate roughly estimated at 5000. These figures speak for themselves.

Again, the Government sent two high officials on a special mission to the Soudan. They failed to accomplish the objects of their mission.

---

[1] *Mahdiism, etc.*

A military force was then sent to save the lives of the two British emissaries. It arrived too late. Both General Gordon and Colonel Stewart were killed.

Lastly, at one time the Government intended to deal a decisive blow to the power of the Mahdi. The project was abandoned and, in my opinion, wisely abandoned. Nevertheless, the impression was left on the minds of the Dervishes that a British army had attempted to reconquer the Soudan, and had failed to do so.

Eventually, the Government fell back on its original policy of withdrawal, from which it had temporarily drifted.

The Gordon mission and the Nile expedition were thus mere episodes in Egyptian and Soudanese history. They will be remembered as mistakes accompanied by suffering and sorrow to individuals, and by failure in an undertaking on which the British nation had set its heart. It is melancholy to think of the blood and treasure which were wasted. Few of those who have sacrificed their lives for their country have done so to so little purpose as the gallant soldiers who fell at Abu Klea, Kirbekan, and in the neighbourhood of Suakin. The only practical result of the Nile expedition was to inspire in the minds of the Dervishes a wholesome dread of British soldiers, and to break the force of the Dervish advance when it eventually occurred. It would be an exaggeration to say that this result was of no utility, but it was obtained at a cost altogether incommensurate with its real value. The same result would have been more easily and perhaps more thoroughly obtained by the adoption of a defensive policy from the first.

Looking more closely to the details in the execution of the British policy, the following are the conclusions at which I arrive:—

In the first place, it was a mistake to send any British official to Khartoum. The task he had to perform was well-nigh impossible of execution, and his nomination involved the assumption of responsibilities on the part of the British Government, which it was desirable to avoid.

Secondly, if any one was to be sent, it was a mistake to choose General Gordon. In spite of many noble traits in his character, he was wanting in some of the qualities which were essential to the successful accomplishment of his mission.

Thirdly, when once General Gordon had been sent, he should have been left a free hand so long as he kept within the main lines of the policy which he was authorised to execute. It is, in my opinion, to be regretted that General Gordon was not allowed to employ Zobeir Pasha, but any view held as to the probable results of employing him must be conjectural.

Fourthly, the question of whether an expedition should or should not have been sent from Suakin to Berber in the spring of 1884 depends on the military practicability of the undertaking, a point on which the best military authorities differed in opinion.

Fifthly, a great and inexcusable mistake was made in delaying for so long the despatch of the Gordon relief expedition.

Sixthly, the Government acted wisely, after the fall of Khartoum, in eventually adopting a defensive policy and in ordering a retreat to Wadi Halfa.

Lastly, it may be said that the British Government were extraordinarily unlucky. Whatever amount of foresight be shown, success in doubtful and difficult enterprises, such as the Gordon Mission and the Nile Expedition, must always depend a good deal on adventitious circumstances, which cannot be foreseen, and over which no Government can exercise any control. I am far from saying that in all the matters which are discussed in these pages, the British Government exercised a proper amount of foresight, but it must be admitted that whenever the goddess Fortune could play them a trick, she appeared, with proverbial fickleness, to take a pleasure in doing so. The British Government made at the time a great stir in the world. The result in the end was that no object of any importance was attained.

> Gratis anhelans, multa agendo nihil agens.

But the situation was one of inordinate difficulty, and those who have had most experience in the conduct of political affairs, and who know how difficult it is to be right and how easy it is to make mistakes, will be least of all inclined to criticise severely the principal actors on the scene.

# CHAPTER XXX

## THE DÉBRIS OF THE SOUDAN

The outlying provinces :—1. *Darfour* : Surrender of the province—The Senoussieh sect—The revolt of Abu Gemaizeh. 2. *Bahr-el-Ghazal* : Lupton Bey surrenders—His death. 3. *Equatoria* : Emin Pasha summoned to surrender—He maintains his position—The Stanley expedition. 4. *Sennar* : The garrison surrenders. 5. *Kassala* : The garrison surrenders. 6. *The Abyssinian Frontier Garrisons* : The Hewett treaty—The garrisons of Amadib, Senhit, Galabat, Gera, and Gedaref. 7. *Berbera* : Its political status—It is occupied by British troops. 8. *Harrar* : Withdrawal of the Egyptian garrison—Installation of the Emir Abdullah—King Menelek occupies the province. 9. *Zeyla* : It is occupied by British troops. 10. *Tajourrah* : The French occupy it. 11. *Massowah* : Its political status—Attitude of the British Government—The Italians occupy Massowah.

When the collapse of Egyptian authority in the Soudan took place, the *disjecta membra* of Ismail Pasha's huge African estate fell to those whose interest it was to pick them up, and who had the power to give effect to their wishes. Those portions which were remote from the coast relapsed into barbarism. Those which were more easy of access were pounced upon by various European Powers, who about this time began what was aptly called by the British press "the scramble for Africa." In the present chapter the main facts as regards all this Egyptian débris will be briefly stated.[1]

---

[1] In the preparation of this chapter I have received great assistance from Sir Reginald Wingate's work *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Soudan.*

### 1. *Darfour.*

When the Mahdist rebellion broke out, the Governor of this province was Slatin Bey, an Austrian officer in the Egyptian service. His position was one of great difficulty, for from the first his own officers were infected with the spirit of revolt. After the destruction of General Hicks's army, the position in Darfour became hopeless. Slatin Bey was at Dara, the capital of the province, against which a force under the command of one of the Mahdi's lieutenants advanced towards the end of 1883. The town at once surrendered. Slatin Bey, writing to General Gordon, described the capitulation in the following terms: "After the annihilation of Hicks's army, the demoralised troops refused to fight any longer. . . . Officers and men demanded capitulation and I, standing there alone and a European, was compelled to follow the majority and compelled to capitulate. Does your Excellency believe that to me, as an Austrian officer, the surrender was easy? It was one of the hardest days in my life."[1]

The events in Darfour during the next few years turned in some degree upon the influence exerted over that remote country and its neighbourhood by the celebrated Sheikh El Senoussi. I take this opportunity, therefore, to describe briefly the rise of the Senoussieh sect.

There are two main divisions of Moslems, namely, the Sunnites and the Shiites. Almost all the Mohammedan inhabitants of the Ottoman dominions and of Africa are Sunnites. They are divided into four Mezhebs, or principal sects, viz. the Hanafi, the Shafaï, the Maliki, and the Hanbali. These sects differ on points of ritual, and as regards the interpretation of certain portions of the Mohammedan law. The Turks in Egypt belong to the Hanafite sect. Most of the Egyptians belong to the Shafaï, but some few to the Maliki sect. Beneath these four main divisions are a number of Tarikas, or minor sects,[1] which were called into existence at a later period of Islamism than the Mezhebs. They have generally been created, and are still being created, by persons noted for their piety and asceticism, who have, for the most part, recommended some special form of prayer or of ceremonial as being particularly efficacious. Some of the Tarikas have risen to considerable importance. Thus, the Wahabi sect caused at one time great political disturbance by reason both of the number and of the aggressive spirit of the sectarians. The Sheikh El Mirghani also founded a large Tarika in the Eastern Soudan. The Sheikh El Senoussi is the head of one of the most important Tarikas which now exist. It has been estimated that his followers number no fewer than 3,000,000, who are scattered widely over the whole of Northern Africa. They are especially numerous in Wadai. In Egypt, the followers of Senoussi are also fairly numerous.

---

[1] After remaining captive at Omdurman for many years, Slatin Pasha succeeded in making his escape in March 1895. He was appointed Inspector-General in the Soudan, and in that capacity rendered very valuable services to the Government. He is a gallant and very capable officer. Some derogatory remarks made about him by General Gordon in his Journal are wholly undeserved.

Mohammed Ben Ali El Senoussi, the founder of the sect, was an Algerian by birth, and though originally a Maliki, did not altogether agree with the recognised leaders of that sect. In one respect his teaching resembled that of Abdul Wahab, that is to say, he only recognised the authority of the Koran and the traditions which are contemporaneous with the Koran, rejecting the teaching of later commentators.[1] In 1853, he established himself in an oasis of the Libyan desert named Jerhboub, near Siwa (Jupiter Ammon). He does not appear at any time to have hazarded a definite statement that his son would be the Mahdi, but he gave several indications during his lifetime that such a contingency was not improbable. For instance, on one occasion the father took off the son's sandals and said to those present: "Be witness that I have served him." It is inferred that he would not have performed this act of servitude if he had not wished it to be believed that his son's religious authority was superior to his own. Further, it is said that the principal supporters of Mohammed Ben Ali's son,[2] who succeeded to the headship of the sect on his father's death, constantly pointed out to others that their leader possessed many of the qualities essential to the true Mahdi. On the other hand, in view of the difficulty, not to say the impossibility of fulfilling the whole of those conditions, it may be confidently predicted that, whenever and wherever a Mahdi is proclaimed, a schism will at once occur. Senoussi was, without doubt, well versed in Mohammedan tradition, and, in spite of the aspirations of a few of his over-zealous and ambitious followers, he must have been aware that his claims to be considered the true Mahdi would not meet with general recognition from the Mohammedan world. He, therefore, wisely resisted the temptation to proclaim himself as the Mahdi. It was, however, natural that he should view with disfavour the pretensions of any rival. Hence, from the outset, Senoussi's influence was exercised in a sense antagonistic to the movement of which Mohammed Ahmed was the leader. His views on this subject carried all the more weight from the fact that his reputation for piety and asceticism was higher than that of Mohammed Ahmed. The latter was also grasping and avaricious, qualities which compared unfavourably with the contempt for worldly riches attributed to Senoussi.[1]

---

[1] The literal translation of the word "Tarika" is a "path."

---

[1] An account of the tenets of the Senoussi sect is given in ch. xii. of Mr. Silva White's book *From Sphinx to Oracle*. Mr. White visited Siwa in 1890. He was unable to go to Jerhboub.

[2] He died in 1902.

Several years of internal dissension followed on Slatin Bey's surrender. As the cruelty and rapacity of the Dervish rule became more and more evident, the religious fervour, which had been at first excited by Mohammed Ahmed, waned. In 1888, a certain Abu Gemaizeh raised the standard of revolt. His programme was "to overthrow the Mahdi imposture and to re-establish the true religion of the Prophet." Abu Gemaizeh was not a member of the Senoussi order, but he attracted the Senoussiyeh to him by giving out that his movement was favoured by the Sheikh of Jerhboub. At first, he gained some successes. "The whole Soudan," Sir Reginald Wingate wrote, "echoed with the wildest reports; even at Cairo it was believed that the end of Mahdiism was near, and that a new Ruler had arisen, who would at least open the roads to Mecca and would no longer be at war with all the world. Relief seemed near. Every arrival from the Soudan reported the growing success of the anti-Mahdist revolt." One of the weak points in the Mahdist religious programme, on which Abu Gemaizeh seized, was that the Khalifa had placed obstacles in the way of Mohammedans performing the ordinary Haj, and had proclaimed that a visit to the shrine of Mohammed Ahmed at Omdurman might be substituted for the time-honoured pilgrimage to Mecca. When Senoussi's views were eventually made known, it was discovered that he gave full moral support to Abu Gemaizeh, in so far as the latter opposed the heterodox views put forward by the Khalifa on the subject of the pilgrimage. But beyond this he did not go. He was, he said, "the peaceful pioneer of a religious revival, which revolted against the bloodshed and rapine of the false Mahdi of the Soudan. He had no intention or desire to interfere. Mohammed Ahmed and his successor must work their own salvation or destruction; he was in no way responsible."

---

[1] There is, however, a practical as well as a religious side to the Senoussi movement. Mr. Weld Blundell, who visited Siwa in 1894, writes: "From the practical side, the whole movement may be described as a very large, well-organised, slave-owning and slave-dealing corporation, managed by the heads of the Brotherhood, with local branches and establishments grouped round the various Zawyas or convents of the order in all parts of North Africa. Without presuming to apportion the real religious sincerity and the purely material element in the movement, it may be taken for granted that, as in similar religious organisations nearer home, religion and business are happily combined in such a way as to give entire satisfaction to the leaders who get the principal benefit of it at present, and to foster vague hopes among the humbler adherents of some great triumph in the future."

Thus the great Sheikh of Jerhboub enunciated a policy of non-intervention in terms which might have done credit to Lord Granville. The result of the attitude taken up by Senoussi was that the influence of Abu Gemaizeh speedily waned. On February 22, 1889, he was attacked by Osman Adam, one of the Khalifa's lieutenants: the Dervishes gained a complete victory. Osman Adam's report of this action, which was unearthed by Sir Reginald Wingate, may be quoted as a characteristic specimen of Mahdist official literature. "The Ansar,"[1] he wrote, "not satisfied with their victory, pursued the retreating enemy till sunset, and after that the cavalry still continued pursuing till almost all were killed. They followed them even as far as the caves and forests, where they tried to conceal themselves, but they were all killed; even those who transformed themselves into apes, wolves, dogs, and rabbits (for the natives of the western countries can be so transformed) were also killed even to the very last. . . . Allah was with us, and we saw several miracles during the battle. Allah sent down fire, which burnt up the dead bodies of the enemy and also their wounded, showing how violent was His wrath upon them. The brethren also saw some sixteen white flags with green borders waving in the air. They also heard the sound of drums beating in the air, and saw objects like mountains falling upon the enemy. The Prophet also revealed himself to many of the followers previous to the battle. . . . It had been my intention to send the heads of all the chiefs to you, but as they have by this time decayed, and would be heavy for messengers, I must be satisfied with sending you only two heads, viz. the head of the devil's agent, and the head of the son of Sultan Salih. . . . The enemy's devil, Abu Gemaizeh, died from small-pox in his house some days ago, and thus Darfour is left without a head." Father Ohrwalder, who escaped from Omdurman in 1891, reported that "the Abu Gemaizeh revolt depopulated almost the entire district. There were but few men to cultivate, and the country became infested by quantities of elephants, lions, and other wild animals."

---

[1] The "Ansar" (literally "Helpers") was the name given to the first converts to Islam made at Medina after the Hegira. The application by the Mahdi of this name to his followers was calculated to excite the resentment of orthodox Mohammedans.

Further internal dissensions ensued, with the result that the Khalifa eventually withdrew his forces from Darfour.

### 2. *Bahr-el-Ghazal.*

"The province of Bahr-el-Ghazal," Sir Reginald Wingate wrote, "may be described as about five times as big as England. It is a district covered with forests and mountains. and seamed with low valleys subject to inundation. . . . The soil is exceptionally fertile and there are cattle in abundance, while the population is estimated at between three and four millions."[1] Gessi Pasha, General Gordon's lieutenant, was the first European Governor of the province. In 1881, he was succeeded by Mr. Frank Lupton, who had served in the British mercantile marine, and who subsequently joined General Gordon in the Soudan.

When, in 1882, the news of the Kordofan rebellion reached the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, many of the most important Sheikhs sent in their allegiance to the Mahdi. Lupton, however, amidst many vicissitudes, held his own. Towards the close of 1883, news arrived of the annihilation of General Hicks's army. This disaster was as decisive of the fate of Bahr-el-Ghazal as it had been of that of Darfour. On April 28, 1884, Lupton wrote to Emin Pasha: "It is all up with me here. Every one has joined the Mahdi, and his army takes charge of the Mudirieh the day after to-morrow. What I have passed through these last few days no one knows. I am perfectly alone." On the following day, Lupton surrendered to Karam-Allah, the commander of the Dervish force. He was invited to embrace the faith of Islam, and to assume the name of Abdullah. Lupton, an eye-witness subsequently reported, "replied to Karam-Allah that he had already adopted the Mohammedan religion, but Karam-Allah was not satisfied and insisted that he should openly adopt the creed, and bade Lupton repeat after him: 'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God,' and while Lupton was repeating this, the Emirs drew their swords, and when he had finished, shouted in one voice: 'Hold to your faith, you are now one of us (Ansar) as we are of you, we are brothers in the faith.'" Lupton was shortly afterwards confined as a prisoner at Omdurman, where he subsequently died.

---

[1] This was probably an overestimate. The population of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, prior to the Dervish rule, was subsequently estimated at 1,500,000.—See *Egypt,* No. 1 of 1904, p. 79.

Thus it was that, in Sir Reginald Wingate's words, "in this vast province, not a shred of Egyptian authority remained; all had been submerged under the waves of Mahdiism, which now rolled placidly over its broad plains, bearing on their way vast bands of slaves for the greatly enlarged households of Mohammed Ahmed, his Khalifas, and his Emirs."

The subsequent history of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province resembles that of Darfour. Mahdist misrule brought in its train its natural accompaniment of discontent and internal dissensions. Eventually, the Dervishes withdrew. Few, in 1885, would have predicted that thirteen years later the ultimate fate of this remote district would bring the two great Western Powers of Europe to the verge of war.[1] Such, however, was to be the case.

### 3. *Equatoria.*

To the south and south-east of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province lies that of Equatoria, the creation of Sir Samuel Baker, whose work was subsequently carried on by General Gordon. In 1879, General Gordon named Edward Schnitzler, a native of Prussian Silesia, better known as Emin Pasha, to be Governor of the province. The latter, on assuming office, gave the usual account of Egyptian misrule.

---

[1] I have purposely omitted any account of what is known as the "Fashoda incident" from this work. I should be most unwilling to do anything which might contribute to revive public interest in an affair which is now, happily for all concerned, well-nigh forgotten.

The word "Fashoda" has been erased from the map. The place is now called by its Shillouk name of Kodok.

"Since 1877," he wrote, "no accounts have been sent in from or kept by this administration. Though the Governors receive monies for the payment of wages, no one has been paid a piastre for years; probably, however, the Governors have bought goods with the funds belonging to the Government and sold them at three times the amount. Slaves figure in these accounts as oxen, asses, etc. The making of false seals and fabricating receipts by their use complete the picture of what has been going on here, and with it all the place is full of prayer-places and Fikis."[1]

By the end of 1882, the whole country to the south of Khartoum, with the exception of the Equatorial province, was in open revolt against Egyptian authority. Towards the end of March 1884, the news of the annihilation of General Hicks's army reached Emin Pasha. Shortly afterwards, he was summoned by Karam-Allah to surrender his province. "Now just think of my position," he wrote somewhat later. "For fourteen months I had had no communication with Khartoum, or news from there. The magazines were quite empty of clothes, soap, coffee, etc. . . . In Lado, there was a rabble of drunkards and gamblers, most of them fellow-countrymen of the rebels, the clerks of my divan. The prospect was not brilliant. . . . Accordingly, I asked my officers here in open council whether they considered it more desirable to submit or to prepare to fight. There could be no doubt what the answer would be; the purport of it was submission."

Emin Pasha did not, however, submit. Karam-Allah's advance was stayed owing to disturbances in his rear. Nevertheless, in the anarchy which prevailed, no effective control could be exercised over the outlying portions of the province. "At the end of 1885," Sir Reginald Wingate wrote, "the extent of Emin's province was about 180 miles, a narrow strip from the lake to Lado, and an area of about one-seventh of the original extent of the province previous to the revolt."

---

[1] A "Fiki" is a man who expounds the law of Islam.

In February 1886, Emin Pasha received a letter from Nubar Pasha in which he was informed that the Egyptian Government had decided to abandon the Soudan, that they were unable to afford him any assistance, and that he was authorised to take any steps he might consider advisable to leave the country. At the same time, Emin Pasha heard of the fall of Khartoum and of the death of General Gordon. The difficulties of his position were thus increased. He decided, however, to remain where he was. "The greater part of my men," he wrote, "especially my officers, have no desire to leave this country. . . . I shall remain here and hold together, as long as possible, the remnant of the last ten years."

It is unnecessary to give the detailed history of all that followed. How, by reason of rebellion and mutiny, Emin Pasha's position became daily more difficult; how his situation attracted the attention and sympathy of the civilised world; how an expedition was eventually organised to relieve him; how Stanley and his adventurous companions cut their way through the dense untrodden forests of Central Africa; how, when they at last reached Emin, the latter was unwilling to leave; how his hesitation was eventually overcome; and how he and his companions were with infinite trouble at last brought down to the coast,—these are matters of history, which have been described by others who are better informed than myself on the subject.[1]

The Lado Enclave, as it is now termed, was leased to King Leopold II., as Sovereign of the

---

[1] *Vide* Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*, 1890.

Independent State of the Congo, by an Agreement signed at Brussels on May 12, 1894. The Congolese occupation caused at one time a good deal of friction between the British Government and King Leopold.[1] Eventually, a further Agreement was signed in London on May 9, 1906. Under this Agreement, the Lado Enclave has to be handed over to the Soudanese Government within six months after the demise of King Leopold.

### 4. *Sennar.*

Of the fate of the province of Sennar and of its once celebrated capital, little need be said. In the spring of 1885, the town was besieged by the Mahdists. The Egyptian commander, Hassan Sadik, made a gallant defence. On his death, which occurred during a sortie, he was succeeded by Nur Bey, who on several occasions repulsed the attacks of the Dervishes and inflicted great loss on them. Eventually, Abdul-Kerim, the Mahdist commander, "having gathered all the neighbouring tribes, completely cut off communication, and soon the garrison, weakened by continuous fighting, was at the last stage of famine. As a final effort, Nur Bey, on August 18, ordered a sortie to be made by Hassan Bey Osman with 1500 of the troops, but the rebels falling on them at Kassab utterly defeated them, and the remnant, with their leader killed, made their way back to the town. On the following day, Nur Bey, having exhausted all the food in the town, was obliged to capitulate. Of the original garrison of 3000 men, 700 only remained,—strong evidence indeed of the severity of the fighting and of the siege." The province of

---

[1] The facts are briefly stated in *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1906, pp. 121-123, and *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, p. 119.

Sennar remained under Dervish rule till the downfall of the Khalifa's power in 1898.

### 5. *Kassala.*

Kassala is the most important inland town in the Eastern Soudan. Its population numbers about 13,000. In November 1883, it was besieged by one of Osman Digna's lieutenants. The siege continued with varying fortunes until July 1885. Hopes were from time to time entertained that relief would come from Abyssinia. The garrison was also encouraged to hold out by the presence of British troops at Suakin. But no relief came. By April 13, 1885, all the donkeys in the town had been eaten. A successful sally, made on June 15, in which 1000 oxen and 1000 sheep were captured, enabled the defence to be prolonged. But the relief was only temporary. By July 30, every kind of food, including gum and hides, had been exhausted. The garrison capitulated. They received a promise that their lives would be spared, but the promise was broken. "It was believed," Sir Reginald Wingate wrote, "that the inhabitants had secreted treasure, and this was made the plea for every description of torture, cruelty, and robbery.' In 1894, Kassala was occupied by the Italians, but three years later (December 1897) was evacuated. It now forms part of the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan.

### 6. *The Abyssinian Frontier Garrisons.*

When, in the winter of 1883, the policy of withdrawal from the Soudan was adopted, the British Government decided to send a mission to King John of Abyssinia, with whom they were on friendly terms, in the hope that his aid might be enlisted in facilitating the retreat of the garrisons from the Egyptian posts adjoining the frontier of Abyssinia. Sir William Hewett was accordingly sent to Abyssinia to act on behalf of the British Government. He was accompanied by Mason Bey, an American officer in the Egyptian service, who was well acquainted with the affairs of the Soudan, and who acted on behalf of the Egyptian Government.

The result of this mission was that a Treaty was signed at Adowa on June 3, 1884. The main provisions of this Treaty were that the province of Bogos, which the King had for long coveted, was to be ceded to him, and that in return he was to facilitate the withdrawal of the Egyptian frontier garrisons, and to permit their retreat through Abyssinian territory.

Public attention at this time was so exclusively directed to the events which were passing at Khartoum, that the British Government never got due credit for the successful efforts which were made to save the Egyptian garrisons on the Abyssinian frontier.

On September 12, 1884, the province of Bogos was, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty, handed over to Abyssinia.

During the spring of 1885, the Egyptian garrisons of Amadib and Senhit were brought safely down to Massowah.

One of the most important garrisons was that of Galabat. In August 1884, Colonel Chermside, who was at that time Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, despatched Major Saad Rifaat to Abyssinia to assist in the preparations which were being made for the relief of Galabat, which was then besieged by the Dervishes. Leaving Adowa with a considerable force of Abyssinians on January 27, 1885, Major Rifaat shortly afterwards attacked and defeated the enemy, and succeeded in bringing the garrison and population, numbering about 3000 men, women, and children, in safety to Massowah, whence those who wished to return were sent back to Egypt.

The garrison of Gera, which had likewise been besieged for some months, was also extricated by the Abyssinians, the Egyptian soldiers being, moreover, subsequently clothed and fed by King John. About 5000 men, women, and children were brought down to Massowah and despatched to Cairo.

In fact, of the posts on the Abyssinian frontier, the only one of which the garrison fell into the hands of the Dervishes was Gedaref, called also Suk Abu Sin. The commandant of this post, which was garrisoned by about 200 men, capitulated in April 1884, that is to say two months before the Hewett Treaty had been concluded. On the whole, therefore, the results of the Treaty were satisfactory.

### 7. *Berbera.*

Ismail Pasha was not content with extending Egyptian authority to the sources of the Nile. Pashadom, with its baneful accompaniments of misrule and oppression, stretched its tentacles to the Somali coast and inland to the fertile province of Harrar. When the parent trunk rotted, the first of the branches to fall off was Berbera. It fell at the feet of the Queen of England.

The Egyptian Governor of Berbera was of the ordinary type. Mr. F. L. James, who had travelled much in the Soudan and in Somaliland, wrote to me on April 21, 1884: "On all hands we heard nothing but the most bitter complaints as to the ill-treatment the natives (Somalis) met with at the hands of the Egyptian Governor of Berbera, Abdul Rahman Bey. . . . That he is detested by the people and a very bad Governor is not open to doubt; and after what happened two years ago to myself and party, while travelling in the Soudan, I am surprised at no enormity on the part of an Egyptian Governor."

Sir Richard Burton wrote in 1856: "The occupation of the port of Berbera has been advised for many reasons. In the first place, Berbera is the true key to the Red Sea, the centre of East African traffic, and the only place for shipping upon the western Erythraean shore from Suez to Guardafui. Backed by lands capable of cultivation, and by hills covered with pine and other valuable trees, enjoying a comparatively temperate climate, with a regular, although thin monsoon, this harbour has been coveted by many a foreign conqueror. Circumstances have thrown it, as it were, into our arms, and, if we refuse the chance, another and a rival nation will not be so blind."[1] The Indian authorities had always been alive to the desirability of preventing Berbera from falling into the hands of any European Power.

The political status of the coast eastward of Zeyla was on a different footing from that portion of the coast which extends from Zeyla to the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. The Sultan exercised rights of sovereignty over the territory between Bab-el-Mandeb and Zeyla, which rights, although never formally recognised by the British Government, had not been disputed. On the other hand, the sovereign rights of the Sultan over the Somali tribes lying between Zeyla and Ras Hafoun had been repeatedly denied by the British Government. In 1877, a Convention was negotiated between Ismail Pasha and the British Government, the main object of which was to recognise the jurisdiction of the Khedive, under the suzerainty of the Sultan, as far eastward as Ras Hafoun. The fifth article of this Convention stipulated that it was not to come into operation until the Sultan gave a formal assurance to the British Government that no portion of the territory on the Somali coast should be ceded to any foreign Power. In spite of repeated invitations, the Sultan had never given this assurance. The Convention was, therefore, invalid, and the hands of the British Government were free. Lord Granville, accordingly, on being pressed by the India Office to move in the matter, instructed Lord Dufferin on May 29, 1884, to denounce the Convention and to inform the Porte that "with regard to the coast eastward of Zeyla, it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government, on the withdrawal of the Egyptians, to make such arrangements as they might think desirable for the preservation of order and the security of British interests, especially at Berbera, from which Aden drew its chief supplies." This communication drew forth some remonstrances from Constantinople; they were set aside. In October 1884, a British official was charged with the administration of Berbera; a small force of police and sepoys was placed at his disposal. A notification of the establishment of a British Protectorate over this part of the coast was conveyed to the French Government by Lord Lyons on April 23, 1885. Thus Berbera, with the neighbouring port of Bulhar, were peaceably absorbed into the British dominions.

---

[1] Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, p. xxxiv.

### 8. *Harrar.*

The fertile province of Harrar lies about 200 miles south-west of Zeyla. Sir Richard Burton visited it in 1856. In his time, the province was governed in a barbarous fashion by Emir Ahmed, one of a family which had for long held dominion over the country. The fertility of Harrar excited the ambition of Ismail Pasha. It was annexed, and in 1874 the reigning Emir was put to death by Raouf Pasha, himself a bad specimen of a bad class. The usual results followed. Major Hunter, who visited Harrar early in 1884, reported: "The Khedive's rule is extremely unpopular, and justly so, for the admitted object of the Governors is to tax the inhabitants to the utmost. No justice is obtainable, peculation is rife, trade is stifled, the soldiery pillage the villages, and the troops are discontented owing to deferred payment and prolonged expatriation. . . . The Governor, Ali Pasha, is a shaky, garrulous old man of Turkish extraction, who has no idea beyond filling the Treasury, presumably for the benefit of the Egyptian Government."

Manifestly, the only wise course to pursue, both in the interests of Harrar and of Egypt, was that the Egyptian Government should abandon a trust which had been so grossly abused. The evacuation of the province was pressed upon the Egyptian Ministers, who, albeit reluctantly, accepted the inevitable logic of facts.

The withdrawal of the garrison, and of others who wished to leave, across 200 miles of country, inhabited by tribes who were far from friendly to the Egyptians, was no easy matter. The duty of executing this task was entrusted to Major Hunter, who was assisted by two other British officers. Radwan Pasha was sent from Cairo to act as Egyptian Commissioner; he co-operated loyally with Major Hunter. The retreat was skilfully conducted. The garrison and followers, to the number of 8359 persons, were marched down to the coast in detachments during the early months of 1885, and embarked for Egypt.

The government of the province was then handed over to Abdullah, a son of the last reigning

Emir. The new Emir did not maintain his position for long. In January 1887, King Menelek of Shoa attacked and took possession of Harrar.

### 9. *Zeyla.*

It has been already mentioned that the political status of Zeyla was different from that of Berbera. In the latter case, the Sultan could not put forward any valid claim to suzerainty. Zeyla, on the other hand, had formed part of the Ottoman dominions before it came under Egyptian jurisdiction. In 1875, it was farmed by the Sultan to Ismail Pasha, on payment of a tribute of £13,500 a year.

The British Government, through their Ambassador at Constantinople, invited the Porte on May 14, 1884, "to resume direct jurisdiction over the ports on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea and to occupy them with Turkish troops." On July 17, the Porte was again invited to take "the necessary steps, on the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops, to maintain its authority over Tajourrah and Zeyla." It was, at the same time, stated that the British Government were "anxious to receive the reply of the Porte with as little delay as possible." The Porte treated the matter in its usual dilatory fashion. No definite answer was given. In the meanwhile, there was an imminent risk of disturbances in the neighbourhood of Zeyla. On August 1, 1884, therefore, Lord Dufferin was instructed to "inform the Porte that unless the Turkish Government were prepared to take immediate steps for the occupation of Zeyla, it would be necessary for Her Majesty's Government to send a force there to preserve order." Still the Sultan did not move. Action became necessary on the part of the British Government. On August 24, 1884, Major Hunter telegraphed to me: "Force landed at Zeyla. Somalis impressed. Governor obliging." The obliging Governor was kept in his place for a while, because some discussion ensued as to the future of Zeyla. A difference of opinion existed among the British authorities as to whether it was worth keeping or not. It is now British territory.

The Egyptian tribute was paid to the Porte for some while after the British occupation of Zeyla. Eventually, in connection with certain Custom-house negotiations, an understanding was arrived at between Cairo and Constantinople that the payment of the tribute should cease.

### 10. *Tajourrah.*

It was not to be supposed that, whilst this scramble for Egyptian territory was going on, the French would remain idle. In 1862, they had taken possession of Obokh, in virtue of a Convention made with some local Sheikhs. The French Government now decided to annex the neighbouring territory of Tajourrah. Early in May 1884, a French ship arrived at Richal, a port near Tajourrah; ten sailors, accompanied by the Vizier of Tajourrah, landed, told the local Sheikhs that the place belonged to them, and that they would return to take possession of it. M. Barrère, the French representative at Cairo, "knew nothing of the matter; he knew Tajourrah was Egyptian territory." Mr. Egerton "thought it possible that there might be some misunderstanding." There was, however, no misunderstanding. The Porte uttered some feeble protests, and tried to excite English jealousy of French extension. The British Government, however, wisely remained indifferent. Since 1884, Tajourrah has been a French possession.

### 11. *Massowah.*

Suakin and Massowah were placed under Egyptian jurisdiction by an Imperial Firman issued in 1865. The tribute payable by Egypt to the Sultan was, at the same time, raised by £37,500 a year.

The same disorder reigned at Massowah as elsewhere. Colonel Chermside telegraphed from Suakin on January 22, 1885: "I do hope you will take a speedy decision as to the Massowah question, as, without wishing to reflect on the long string of my predecessors, it is hard to carry on at all in the chaos everything is in, police, pensions, establishment of employés, dues, contracts, water-supply, public works, military garrison, everything is in indescribable confusion, costly without efficiency." The Egyptian Government were incapable of evolving order out of this chaos. The only possible course was to let Massowah go the way of the other lost possessions of Egypt. The question then arose as to who should step into possession of the property, which was about to be abandoned.

"L'Italie," a French diplomatist said at the time of the Berlin Congress, "rôde autour du monde pour trouver un endroit quelconque où elle pourra placer son drapeau." The Italian nation has, in fact, ever since its creation, shown a good deal of the restless ambition which often attaches itself to youth. The desire manifested of late years in Italy to establish colonies in distant lands appears to be based to some extent on the plea that other great Powers have founded colonies, and that, therefore, Italy must do the same. The Italians, in all the exuberance of youthful national life, forgot, in 1885, that the monk's cowl does not necessarily make the monk, and rushed into

African colonisation with all the impetuosity which characterises Southern nations.

Some years previously, the Italians had established themselves at Assab Bay, a proceeding which was viewed with a good deal of rather unnecessary ill-humour by the Indian Government of the day. When it became apparent that the neighbouring territory of Massowah was likely to be in the political market, Italian ambition fired up. It was thought necessary to acquire this desirable possession before it could fall into the hands of any rival claimant. The first thing to do was to secure the goodwill of England; Lord Granville was sounded on the subject. On December 22, 1884, he wrote to the British Ambassador at Rome: "I have informed Count Nigra (the Italian Ambassador in London) that Her Majesty's Government were desirous of showing their friendly feeling towards Italy in all ways. The Egyptian Government were unable, I said, to continue their hold on all the African littoral of the Red Sea. Under these circumstances, the ports naturally reverted to Turkey. We had for some time been giving advice to the Porte to retake possession of them. I was glad, I continued, to observe that M. Mancini fully recognised that we had no right and made no pretension to give away that which did not belong to us. If the Italian Government should desire to occupy some of the ports in question, it was a matter between Italy and Turkey; but I was able to inform him that Her Majesty's Government, for their part, had no objection to raise against the Italian occupation of Zulla, Beilul, or Massowah."

When, at a subsequent period, many sober-thinking Italians regretted the occupation of Massowah, it was occasionally alleged that England had instigated the occupation, and that Italy had, in fact, been used as a catspaw in order to get the British Government out of a difficulty. These statements are devoid of foundation. The British Government never proposed to Italy to occupy Massowah. All they did was to adopt a friendly attitude towards Italy, and to abstain from creating difficulties which might have proved obstacles to the attainment of Italian aspirations. The British Government did nothing to thwart the Italians; but beyond this they did not go. Indeed, I remember telling M. de Martino, the Italian Consul-General at Cairo, that my personal opinion was that the Italians were making a mistake in occupying Massowah. He was inclined to share my views, but the matter was not one for him to decide. The Italian Government and the Italian Parliament were naturally presumed to be the best judges of Italian interests. M. Mancini, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, warmly espoused the cause of occupation, and he was at the time supported by public opinion in Italy. Dissuasion or opposition on the part of England would have been regarded as an unfriendly act dictated by an unworthy jealousy of Italian extension.

When the Italian Government were assured of the absence of objection on the part of England, they acted with promptitude. Plausible excuses for action were not wanting. Some Italian travellers had been murdered in the neighbourhood of Massowah, and the Italian Government had failed to obtain adequate satisfaction. Early, therefore, in the month of February 1885, a formidable squadron appeared at Massowah and took possession of the place. The Egyptian garrison was shortly afterwards withdrawn.

The Sultan was indignant. For a time, the Foreign Offices of Europe rang with angry but ineffectual protests from the Porte. The Powers who had guaranteed the integrity of the Ottoman Empire were implored to interfere. But no one had any real interest in the matter. The Cabinets of Europe turned their heads the other way, and the diplomatic clamour soon died out. From that time forth, Italy has been in possession of Massowah. Whether it is worth while for the Tuscan and Neapolitan peasant to continue to pay taxes for the maintenance of Italian authority over a territory, which will probably never be of any great value either from a commercial or from any other point of view, is a matter for the Italian nation to decide. Nations are not, however, entirely governed by considerations of material interests. The national honour and dignity are supposed to be at stake, and they will, without doubt, so far carry the day as to prevent Italy from abandoning territory which possibly many Italians now think it was unwise ever to have seized.

Thus it was that the huge unwieldy edifice, which Ismail Pasha had sought to erect, fell with a crash which resounded throughout North-Eastern Africa. The Englishman, the Italian, the Frenchman, the Abyssinian, the Dervish, and the slave-hunter divided the spoils between them. And why did the edifice fall? The destruction of General Hicks's army precipitated the catastrophe. But the real reason why Ismail Pasha's empire fell was that it was eventually overtaken by the fate inevitably attending all political fabrics which are rotten to the core. It fell because it deserved to fall. It may be that the light of Western civilisation will some day be shed over the whole of Africa, but if this consummation is ever to be attained, it must be through other agents than the slave-hunting, corrupt, and tyrannical Pashas, who were employed by the Egyptian Government, and who, themselves but semi-civilised, introduced none of the blessings but some of the curses of civilisation amongst the people who, by a cruel fate, were for a time placed under their control.

# CHAPTER XXXI

## THE DEFENCE OF EGYPT

### 1886–1892

The Egyptian army—Negotiations with the Dervishes—Fighting on the frontier—The siege of Suakin—Defeat of Osman Digna—Wad-el-Nejumi—Nejumi advances—The battles of Argin and of Toski—Death of Wad-el-Nejumi—Results of the battle—Situation at Suakin—The reoccupation of Tokar—Defeat of Osman Digna.

Although British military aid to a very limited extent was subsequently on one or two occasions afforded to the Egyptian Government, it may be said that from the date of the battle of Ginniss (December 30, 1885) the defence of Egypt against the Dervishes practically devolved on the Egyptian army. That army was now officered by a well-selected body of Englishmen. Its organisation had been greatly improved. The men were gaining confidence in themselves. A small Egyptian Camel Corps had fought at Kirbekan, and its conduct had obtained General Brackenbury's commendations. A more considerable Egyptian force had taken a creditable part in the battle of Ginniss. Hopes, therefore, began to be entertained that for the future the Egyptian army would of itself suffice to repel any attack which might be made by the Dervishes. The sequel showed that these hopes were destined to be realised.

It has been already shown that a great shrinkage of Egyptian territory had taken place. The army was no longer called upon to defend remote regions in the centre of Africa. Its task was of a more modest nature. In the first place, it had to prevent the Dervishes from descending the valley of the Nile farther than Wadi Halfa; in the second place, it had to maintain whatever was left of Egyptian authority in the Eastern Soudan. For the time being, this latter task was confined to the defence of the town of Suakin, for Egyptian authority did not extend beyond its walls. For obvious reasons, based on the difficulties of communication, the operations in the valley of the Nile and at Suakin were to a great extent independent of each other.

Before entering upon a description of the military operations which were about to take place, it will be as well to allude briefly to an attempt which was made to negotiate with the Dervishes. A Convention between the British Government and the Porte was signed at Constantinople, on October 24, 1885, in virtue of which two Commissioners, one British and one Turkish, were despatched to Cairo.[1] The second article of the Convention provided that the Ottoman Commissioner was to consult with the Khedive "upon the best means of tranquillising the Soudan by pacific measures." After some delay, it was arranged that Youssuf Pasha Shuhdi should be sent to Wadi Halfa in order to try his hand at negotiation with the Dervishes. He left Cairo for the frontier in May 1886.

It was as well to make an attempt to negotiate, if only to show to those who believed in the possibility of successful negotiations that it was hopeless to attempt to come to any arrangement with the Dervishes. But to all who had any appreciation of the true nature of the Mahdist movement, it was obvious that Youssuf Pasha Shuhdi's mission was foredoomed to failure. It proved, in fact, to be wholly unproductive of results. A year later, the Khalifa addressed letters to the Queen, the Sultan, and the Khedive, which breathed the true spirit of Mahdiism. The letter to the Queen terminated in the following eloquent, if somewhat bombastic peroration: "And thou, if thou wilt not yield to the command of God, and enter among the people of Islam and the followers of the Mahdi—grace be upon him—come thyself and thy armies and fight with the host of God. And if thou wilt not come, then be ready in thy place, for at His pleasure and at the time that He shall will it, the hosts of God will raze thy dwelling and let thee taste of sorrow, because thou hast turned away from the path of the Lord, for therein is sufficiency, and salvation is to him who followeth the Mahdi."

---

[1] This subject is more fully treated in Chapter XLVI

For three years subsequent to the battle of Ginniss, desultory fighting continued in the neighbourhood of Suakin, and in the Nile valley. Notably, a brilliant skirmish took place on April 28, 1887, at Sarras, which resulted in the defeat of the Dervishes with a loss of about 200 men, the Egyptian loss being 51 killed and wounded. It was not, however, until December 1888 that any serious engagement occurred. By that time, the indigenous tribes near Suakin had learnt to appreciate the true character of Dervish rule. They were either openly hostile to Osman Digna, or were only prevented by fear from throwing off their allegiance to the Mahdi. Osman Digna, however, still terrorised the country with tribal levies drawn from a distance. He obtained reinforcements and laid siege to Suakin. It was eventually decided that he should be attacked, and for this purpose more Egyptian troops were despatched from Cairo. In addition to these, owing to pressure brought to bear upon the Government in Parliament, a small British force was sent from Cairo to Suakin, though its presence was quite unnecessary. Sir Francis Grenfell, who had succeeded Sir Evelyn Wood as Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army, conducted the operations in person. On December 20, 1888, the Dervishes were attacked and driven from their entrenchments with a loss of 500 men. The British and Egyptian loss was 2 officers and 50 men killed and wounded. The result of this action was to relieve the pressure on Suakin. Osman Digna, however, still maintained his hold over the Eastern Soudan generally. A further result of no slight importance was that the Egyptian troops acquired confidence in themselves and inspired confidence in the minds of the public. Previous to this action, few believed in the Egyptian army. Subsequent to the action, the voice of criticism was to a certain extent silenced. It had been proved that some reliance could be placed on Egyptian troops.

After this engagement, the valley of the Nile became the chief centre of interest.

A period of political hurricane, whether the scene be laid in savage Africa or in civilised Europe, generally brings to the front some individual who appears to embody in his own person the genius of the principles which it is sought to assert. Arábi, though no hero, was a fitting representative of the justifiable, but blind, sullen, and unintelligent discontent which prevailed amongst the Egyptians at the time of the rebellion of which he was the leader. The Mahdist Avatar was of a different type. The true incarnation of Mahdiism was not to be found in Osman Digna. nor even in the Mahdi himself. Both of these men were in some degree strutting on the stage. It may well be doubted whether either of them believed in himself. Enlightened self-interest, more especially in the shape of the acquisition of wealth, lurked behind the grandiloquent periods of their Proclamations, and may be traced in the stage tricks by which it was sought to strengthen the faith of a credulous and fanatical population. When a prophet puts pepper under his finger-nails in order to excite his lachrymal glands[1] a safe indication is given that he has descended from his prophetic pedestal, and that, by his own confession, he may be classed amongst Pythonesses, the manipulators of Delphic oracles and winking virgins.

It was reserved for Wad-el-Nejumi to embody in his own person the true principles of militant Mahdiism. He was at once the Peter the Hermit of the Mahdist crusaders and the Prince Rupert of Dervish chivalry. He believed in Mahdiism, and he believed in himself. When summoned by Sir Francis Grenfell to surrender previous to the battle of Toski, he replied, "We are not afraid of any one; we only fear God!" and, without doubt, he spoke the truth. Brave, resourceful, and pertinacious, Nejumi inspired amongst his followers a confidence which he carried to his grave, and which stood the test of military defeat and death. Few pictures are more touching than that of the host of wild Dervish prisoners mourning with heartfelt sorrow in the palm-grove of Toski over the body of the chieftain who had led them, their companions, their wives and their children, through suffering and privation, to the destruction of their political hopes and to death. Sir Reginald Wingate thus describes the character of this picturesque savage: "Nejumi's career closed only at Toski, when his devoted bodyguard sold their lives dearly in defence of his revered corpse. He was a Jaalin, but one in whom the Baggara recognised warlike qualities similar to their own, and with whom it was important to keep on good terms. In early life a Fiki, like the Mahdi, and his devoted friend, stern, hard, ascetic, the thin dark man was the incarnation of a blind sincerity of conviction. He never transgressed the self-appointed strictness with which he ruled his conduct. Withal, a spice of madness entered into his composition. There was no man but trusted his word, and his was the distant enterprise, his the forefront of danger always. Mahdiism was the natural outlet for his wild temper. He was the Khalid of the Prophet's wars. He it was who prepared the stratagem which annihilated Hicks. He it was who crept silently round through the shallow mud beyond the crumbled ramparts of Khartoum."

---

[1] "The Greek who came in told the Greek Consul that the Mahdi puts pepper under his finger-nails, and when he receives visitors then he touches his eyes and weeps copiously; that he eats a few grains of dhoora openly, but in the interior of the house he has fine feeding and drinks alcoholic drinks."—Gordon's *Journal*, vol. i. p. 32.

The defeat at Ginniss checked the advance of the Dervishes, but their leaders were not discouraged. It is probable that the Soudanese population failed to realise the fact that any military reverse had been sustained. The Khalifa vied with Napoleon in the mendacity of his bulletins. Moreover, the main facts, as they must have presented themselves to the minds of his followers, were that a British force had invaded the Soudan, that it had failed to accomplish its object, that the capital of the Soudan had fallen in spite of British endeavours to save it, and that the British army had then retired and had assumed a defensive attitude. It can, therefore, be no matter for surprise that "general rejoicings" took place at Khartoum. The Dervishes, confident in the sacred nature and ultimate success of their cause, were stimulated to fresh exertions. As Lord Wolseley, General Gordon, and others had predicted, it was decided to invade Egypt. "Nejumi," Sir Reginald Wingate says, "burnt his house at Omdurman, and vowed that he would not return until he had conquered Egypt. On his departure, the Khalifa Abdullah assembled the four Khalifas and all the Emirs. They all stretched out their hands in the direction of Cairo, and called out 'Allahu Akbar,' three times. Then the Khalifa Abdullah called out in a loud voice, 'O Ansar! fear not for the fight for the land of Egypt; you will suffer much at the battle of Assouan, after which the whole of Egypt will fall into your hands. O Ansar! you will also suffer much at the battle of Mecca, after which the whole country will be yours.'"

Some time, however, elapsed before any forward movement was made. A revolt against the Khalifa's authority took place in Kordofan; troubles occurred in Darfour, and considerable bodies of men had to be detached for service on the Abyssinian frontier. Moreover, the important tribe of Kababish Arabs, who inhabit the territory west of Dongola, assumed an attitude of hostility to Mahdiism, nor was it till 1887 that they were crushed and their chief, Saleh Bey, killed in a decisive engagement. The Mahdist leaders, therefore, had their hands full for the space of three years. As successive seasons passed and no forward movement was made, it began to be thought that Dervish invasion was a mere bugbear.

At last, however, the long-expected invasion took place. In the summer of 1889, Nejumi advanced down the valley of the Nile with a motley force, consisting in all of over 11,000 souls. He was joined at Sarras by a further body of 1200 fighting men, of whom about 300 were armed with rifles, and some 1000 camp-followers. A short distance south of Wadi Halfa, Nejumi left the river. He decided to turn Wadi Halfa, to move along the west bank parallel to, but at some little distance from the Nile, and then to strike the river again at a point somewhere between Wadi Halfa and Korosko. He hoped and believed that he would be joined by the Nubian population.

This plan was faulty in its conception. It was of a nature to facilitate the conduct of defensive operations. It involved toilsome marches under a burning sun over a trackless desert devoid of water. The difficulty of obtaining supplies was great. Even before leaving the river, many of the horses, camels, and donkeys had been killed and eaten. Constant excursions to the river were necessary in order to obtain water, and the river was occupied by Egyptian troops, who could be moved from point to point with comparative ease by utilising the steamers and barges which were at the disposal of Colonel Wodehouse, the commandant of the frontier. In the language of strategists, the Egyptian army was acting on interior lines. By July 2, Nejumi's force occupied a position in the desert a short distance from Arguin, a village on the river about 3½ miles north of Wadi Halfa. His movements were carefully watched and followed by Colonel Wodehouse with a flying column of about 2000 men. The Dervishes attacked the village and, after a sharp engagement, were repulsed with a loss of about 900 men, amongst whom were several important Emirs. The Egyptian loss consisted of 4 officers and 66 men killed and wounded. This spirited action reflected great credit on Colonel Wodehouse and the force which he commanded. It discouraged the Dervishes, and contributed materially to the final and decisive victory at Toski. Many of

Nejumi's men deserted. Abdul Halim, his principal lieutenant, advised a retreat. It was futile, he thought, "to attempt an invasion of Egypt with insufficient men, no food, and enormous difficulties in obtaining water." Nejumi's indomitable spirit was, however, not to be broken. He made an eloquent appeal to the religious zeal of his followers, who resolved to go on, and if needs be to die with him. Accordingly, the unwieldy column, dogged at every step by the watchful and pertinacious Colonel Wodehouse, moved slowly and laboriously northward. The Dervishes suffered greatly. "Desultory skirmishes," Sir Reginald Wingate wrote, "took place daily, and numbers of camp-followers, women and children, were captured. One and all gave pitiable accounts of the state of affairs in the Arab camp. The numbers of camels, horses, and donkeys were rapidly diminishing, as they constituted almost the sole food. Might was right; so the lion's share, such as it was, fell to the fighting men, while the miserable camp-followers subsisted on powdered date-seeds and the core of the date-palm tree, which, when ground, is said to have certain nutritive properties. But many of these unfortunate people were reduced to a state of starvation and, flocking to the river-bank in numbers, were received by patrolling gun-boats, and brought to the Egyptian camp, where they were fed and cared for, and, if wounded, admitted to hospital."

In the meanwhile, reinforcements, both British and Egyptian, were hurrying up from Cairo. The Egyptians were the first to arrive, and Sir Francis Grenfell, who had assumed the command, seeing a favourable opportunity, struck the decisive blow before the main body of British troops came up.[1]

---

[1] A small body of British cavalry, however, took part in the battle of Toski.

On August 2, the Egyptian force occupied Toski, a village on the west bank of the Nile, about midway between Wadi Halfa and Korosko. Nejumi camped, on the night of the 2nd, in the desert about five miles from the village. Early on the morning of the 3rd, Sir Francis Grenfell made a reconnaissance in force, and, on approaching the Dervish position, at once recognised that the topographical features of the ground were very favourable to the Egyptian troops.

I visited the battlefield of Toski a few months later. Many of the Dervish dead were still unburied. The empty cartridge cases, which were strewed about, showed clearly the positions which had been occupied by the Egyptian troops. It would be difficult to conceive ground better calculated to give disciplined, well-armed, and well-equipped troops every possible advantage over hordes of courageous but ill-disciplined savages. The soil of the desert, which is here undulating, is composed of hard shingly sand, over which infantry, cavalry, and artillery can move with ease and rapidity. Here and there, a few rocks and boulders, behind which shelter can be obtained, rise up from the plain. Save, however, in these localities, the ground is completely bare. Once driven from the shelter of the rocks, it was clear that the arms of precision, with which the Egyptian soldiers were furnished, would work with deadly effect on the Dervishes. Sir Francis Grenfell, therefore, with the eye of a true tactician, determined to bring on an action at once. Orders were sent to Toski for the remainder of the Egyptian troops to come out. In the meanwhile, the cavalry, under Colonel Kitchener, headed Nejumi, who at first wished to avoid an action, and was endeavouring to slip away to the north. It was evident to Nejumi that he had to accept Sir Francis Grenfell's challenge.

He gave his followers an Arab version of Nelson's order at Trafalgar. "We must all," he said, "stand prepared to meet our Maker to-day."

It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of what followed. It will be sufficient to say that Nejumi's force was routed; 1200 of his followers were killed, and the greater portion of the remainder were taken prisoner, either immediately or during the next three days. Sir Reginald Wingate estimates that the total force with which Nejumi crossed the frontier on July 1, together with the reinforcements he subsequently received, amounted to about 5700 fighting men and 8000 camp-followers. Of these, about 1000 fighting men and 2000 camp-followers returned to their homes. The remainder were either killed, died of disease and starvation, or were taken prisoners. The Egyptian loss at the battle was 165 killed and wounded.

What, however, became of him who is the one interesting figure in Dervish history? What became of the savage chieftain who had looked down on the lines of Wadi Halfa but a few weeks previously and had sworn, in words that bring back Border minstrelsy to the mind of an Englishman, that he would "stable his steed in Wodehouse's chamber"? Nejumi was slightly wounded at an early stage of the fight. One of his relations, who was taken prisoner at Toski, said: "On the capture of the first position, one of the Emirs escaped from the onslaught and rushed breathlessly by, crying to Nejumi that all was over and that he should fly. Instead of listening to this advice, Nejumi mounted his horse and, dashing down to the plain, vainly endeavoured to rally his men." He was again wounded, this time severely, and his horse was shot under him, but he reached the shelter of the hills. He appears then to have been wounded yet a third time. "During the artillery attack on the second position," Sir Reginald Wingate says, "a well-directed shell brought down the largest banner, which was subsequently discovered to be Nejumi's, and it is probable that the shell which broke his flag-pole also wounded Nejumi again." He was carefully tended by his faithful bodyguard, who placed him on a rough camel-litter, and endeavoured to carry him to the rear. The party, "on being observed, was fired on by a troop of cavalry; the camel fell, and most of the men appeared to have been killed; the cavalry then followed up, and called on the remainder to surrender, but as they approached, the Arabs supposed to have been killed, suddenly sprang up, and rushing at them, a hand-to-hand encounter ensued; a number were killed, and the remainder returned once more to their camel. They were again called upon to surrender, but their only response was a second charge, which resulted in all being killed except one, who, mounting a passing horse, succeeded in escaping." It was then found that the camel carried the dead body of Nejumi. "One of his sons, a boy of five years old, was found dead beside the camel, while another baby boy scarcely a year old was brought by his nurse into the camp at Toski on the following day."[1]

There is a rude pathos about the life and death of this savage warrior, which brings to the mind an *ἀνὴρ ἄριστος* of Homeric, or a Beowulf of Anglo-Saxon times.

I have already said that the lives lost at Abu

---

[1] Of all the sons of earth, few have had their destiny more completely changed by accident than this child. Instead of being brought up to detest Christians amidst savage surroundings in the Soudan, he was handed over to the tender care of the English nursing sisters at the principal hospital at Cairo, by whom he was a good deal spoilt, and who were more devoted and certainly more willing slaves to him than any of those whom his father could have captured in the centre of Africa.

Klea, Kirbekan, and other previous battles in the Soudan were wasted, or as good as wasted. The same cannot be said of those who fell at Toski. In this case, the soldier was the executive arm of a wise policy. He was defending the ground secured to civilisation from the attacks of barbarous fanatics. He fought in a good cause. He deserved to triumph, and his triumph was complete. The victory of Toski brought important political results in its train. It pricked the Mahdist bubble. It showed that the Dervishes, although perhaps still strong for purposes of defence in their own remote and inhospitable deserts, were no longer to be feared as aggressors. It gave confidence to the Egyptian army, to the Egyptian people, and to Europe. It showed that those who had dwelt on the necessity of "smashing up the Mahdi" at Khartoum, had been in error; that, although right in supposing that the Dervishes would invade Egypt, they had overrated the Dervish power of offence; that the Mahdist movement had less cohesion and was less formidable than was originally supposed; and that a small Egyptian force led by British officers, with merely the moral support to be derived from the presence of a British garrison in Egypt, was sufficient to guarantee the integrity of the Khedive's dominions. With the defeat at Toski, the aggressive power of Mahdiism collapsed. Sir Francis Grenfell, and those who fought under him, gave tranquillity to the valley of the Nile, and enabled the work of the civilian reformer to proceed without fear of external aggression. These were great achievements, which deserve the acknowledgments of all who are interested in the welfare of Egypt.

The scene must now be shifted back again to the Eastern Soudan. For more than two years after the defeat of Osman Digna on December 20, 1888, no events of importance took place in the neighbourhood of Suakin. Egyptian authority was limited to the ground enclosed by the fortifications of the town. Any isolated wood-cutter or cultivator who roamed beyond the range of the guns was liable to be killed or captured by the stray Dervishes who infested the environs. The indigenous tribes became daily more hostile to Osman Digna, but they had not the strength nor the power of combination necessary to drive him out of the country.

In the meanwhile, a lengthened controversy took place as to whether it was desirable to prohibit or to permit trade with the interior. Considerable difference of opinion existed amongst the local authorities as to the wisest course to be pursued under the circumstances. On the one hand, the military authorities urged that if grain were allowed to leave the coast, it could not be prevented from reaching the Dervishes, and further, that under the cover of legitimate trade, they would receive munitions of war. Thus, attacks on Egyptian territory would be facilitated. A serious attack on Suakin, which was contemplated in 1890, was, in fact, only prevented by the withdrawal of the permission to trade, which had been previously accorded. On the other hand, it was urged that the Dervishes were few in number, that they tyrannised over the rest of the population, and that it was unjust and impolitic to make the mass of the people suffer for the faults of a few, who, moreover, did not form part of the indigenous tribes of the Eastern Soudan, but were strangers coming from distant parts, whose presence was unwelcome to the natives.

A policy, which was almost prohibitive of trade, as also one which placed no hindrance on trade, were, therefore, supported with an equal degree of conviction by competent authorities. Under these circumstances, the course of action dictated from Cairo was necessarily vacillating. At times, trade was allowed; at other times, it was wholly or in part prohibited. Neither could this be any matter for surprise, for the arguments which the advocates of both policies were able to advance were valid, if considered exclusively on their own merits.

Another question, which grew in importance during the year 1890, was the Slave Trade, to which a stimulus was given by the presence of the Dervishes on the coast. The British cruisers in the Red Sea were powerless to stop the traffic. Arab dhows would lie concealed amongst the numerous creeks along the coast, which, owing to the coral reefs, cannot generally be approached by large ships. The slave caravans would wait a short distance inland. A favourable opportunity would be awaited, the slaves would be brought down to the shore, embarked at sunset, and by the following morning, with a fair wind, the dhow would have well-nigh reached the opposite coast of Arabia.

It was frequently pressed upon me during the year 1889 that the only remedy for this state of things was to reoccupy Tokar, which is the granary of the Eastern Soudan. It was pointed out that, if Osman Digna were once driven out of Tokar, he would be no longer able to obtain supplies, and would perforce be obliged to evacuate the Eastern Soudan. For some while, I hesitated to move. I was reluctant to undertake offensive operations of any kind in the Soudan, and, moreover, I was aware that any proposed advance would be viewed with great dislike in England. At last, however, I came to the conclusion that the reoccupation of Tokar was desirable, and that as a military operation it presented no great difficulty. In the spring of 1890, I submitted these views to the British Government.

Lord Salisbury, who then presided at the Foreign Office, was not on principle averse to the employment of force, but, before sanctioning its employment, he wished to be convinced that the adoption of such a course was both necessary and desirable. He habitually viewed military arguments with suspicion. At a later period, when there was a question of giving up to Turkey some forts garrisoned by Egyptian troops on the coast of Midian, Lord Salisbury wrote to me privately: "I would not be too much impressed by what the soldiers tell you about the strategic importance of these places. It is their way. If they were allowed full scope, they would insist on the importance of garrisoning the moon in order to protect us from Mars."

In the case now under discussion, Lord Salisbury was not convinced of the desirability of departing from a defensive attitude.[1] The matter was, therefore, allowed to drop for a while.

---

[1] Lord Salisbury's objections to an advance on Tokar were stated to me in a private letter, dated March 28, 1890, in the following terms: "The arguments against taking Tokar appear to me to be that the operation must involve some money, and may involve very much, and that the finances of Egypt, though no longer in an embarrassed condition, are only convalescent, and a very slight imprudence might throw them back into the condition from which they have been so painfully and laboriously drawn. Again, when once you have permitted a military advance, the extent of that military advance scarcely remains within your own discretion. It is always open to the military authorities to discover in the immediate vicinity of the area to which your orders confine them, some danger against which it is absolutely necessary to guard, some strategic position whose invaluable qualities will repay ten times any risk or cost that its occupation may involve. You have no means of arguing against them. They are upon their own territory, and can set down your opposition to civilian ignorance; and so, step by step, the imperious exactions of military necessity will lead you on into the desert. To these considerations I must add that they will appear infinitely magnified to the terrified minds of people here at home. They were so deeply impressed with the disasters of six years ago, and the apparently inexorable necessity which had driven them into situations where those disasters were inevitable, that they shrink instinctively from any proposal to advance into the Egyptian desert. I do not say that this is a sufficient argument to prevent such

In the autumn of 1890, the subject was again brought to my notice. "I am convinced," Sir Francis Grenfell wrote, "that the time has come when, without any strain on the finances of the country, and without any assistance from English troops, the country as far as Tokar could be pacified." I reconsidered the question carefully. The evils resulting from the presence of the Dervishes in the neighbourhood of Suakin were daily becoming more apparent. I was more than ever convinced that, as a military operation, the reoccupation of Tokar presented no great difficulties, and that it would not involve any considerable expenditure of money. More than this, I felt certain that there was no serious risk of being dragged into offensive operations on a large scale in the Soudan. No one was more open to conviction than Lord Salisbury. Knowing this, I pressed him to reconsider the matter. Eventually, on February 7, 1891, Lord Salisbury telegraphed to me that the Government sanctioned the occupation of Tokar.

Reinforcements were now sent to Suakin. On February 13, Colonel Holled Smith, with a force of about 2000 men, occupied Trinkitat without opposition. On the 16th, he advanced in the direction of El Teb. On the 19th, he came in contact with the enemy at a short distance from the town of Tokar. A sharp engagement ensued. "The Dervishes," Colonel Holled Smith reported, "pushed home their attack with their usual intrepidity and fearlessness. The troops, however, stood their ground, and did not yield one inch throughout the line." Finally, the Dervishes were routed with heavy loss. Osman Digna escaped, but most of

---

an advance, if there is a clear balance of undoubted advantage in its favour; but, in the absence of any such evidence, it must be accepted as a strong presumption."

his leading Emirs were killed. The Egyptian loss was 10 killed, including one English officer, and 48 wounded. Whatever remained of the Dervish force fled in confusion towards Kassala. The defeat of the Dervishes was hailed with genuine satisfaction by the population. The number of persons found at Tokar who had been subjected to mutilation of the most cruel description, bore ample testimony to the barbarity of Dervish rule.

The Tokar expedition was, therefore, a complete success. It accomplished for the Eastern Soudan what Toski did for the valley of the Nile. It cleared the country of Dervishes, and enabled the work of the civilian reformer to commence.[1]

To sum up—the three important military events, which took place, during the years immediately following the evacuation of the Soudan in 1885, were, first, the defeat of the Dervishes before Suakin on December 20, 1888; this relieved the pressure on Suakin, but did not produce any further result of importance. Secondly, the defeat of Nejumi's force at Toski on August 3, 1889; this broke the aggressive power of the Dervishes and tranquillised the Nile valley. Thirdly, the defeat of Osman Digna near Tokar on February 19, 1891; this permitted an Egyptian reoccupation of the province of Tokar, and tranquillised the greater part of the Eastern Soudan. After many years of painful transition, therefore, Egypt, reduced to manageable dimensions, at last acquired a settled frontier, which the Egyptian Government were able to defend with the military and financial resources at their disposal.

If a regenerated Egypt is now springing up, its existence is in a great measure due to the fact that, through good and evil report, the policy of withdrawing from the Soudan and adhering to a strictly defensive attitude on the Egyptian frontier was steadily maintained for some years.

---

[1] On February 13, Lord Salisbury wrote to me: "Up to the time when I write all seems to have gone well with the Tokar expedition; very little notice is taken of it here. We are thinking of nothing except strikes, and of the later cantos of the epic of Kitty O'Shea."

# CHAPTER XXXII

## THE RECONQUEST OF KHARTOUM

### October 1895–September 1898

Necessity of reconquering the Soudan—Danger of premature action—The Italian defeat at Adua—It is decided to advance on Dongola—Provision of funds—Sir Herbert Kitchener—Indian expedition to Suakin—Railway construction—Battle of Firket—Capture of Dongola—The Egyptian Government repay the money advanced by the Commissioners of the Debt—The British Government advance £800,000—Question of a further offensive movement—Capture of Abu Hamed and Berber—Reoccupation of Kassala—British troops sent to the Soudan—The battle of the Atbara—The battle of Omdurman—Cost of the campaign—The War Office—The policy of reconquest.

The Soudan had been left derelict, not so much because the cargo was valueless, but rather because no hands were available to effect the salvage. It was, however, certain from the first that the reconquest of some, at all events, of the lost provinces would, sooner or later, have to be undertaken. To those who were well acquainted with all the circumstances, it might, indeed, be clear that England was not responsible for the loss of the Soudan, but the broad fact, which had sunk into the minds of the British public, was this—that during a period when British influence was paramount in Egypt, certain provinces, which had before been open to trade, and which might have been subjected to the influences of civilisation, had been allowed to relapse into barbarism. The national honour was touched. It was thought that the British

Government, even if not originally responsible for the loss of the provinces, would become responsible if no endeavour were made to effect their reconquest. A sense of shame was very generally felt that, under British auspices, Egyptian territory should have undergone such severe shrinkage. The popular sentiment on the subject found expression in the feeling that "Gordon should be avenged."

It was from the first obvious that the partial reconquest of the Soudan was not beyond the military and financial resources of England, but little inclination was for some while shown, either by successive Governments or by public opinion, to employ those resources in order to attain the object in view. The problem, which apparently had to be faced, was how the Egyptian Government, with but little or no British help, could reassert their authority in the Soudan. It was a necessary condition to the solution of this problem that it should not entail any increase to the fiscal burdens of the Egyptian people, and that it should not involve any serious risk that the affairs of Egypt proper, which were beginning to settle down, should relapse into disorder.

During the years which immediately followed the retreat of the troops after the abortive Gordon expedition, the main danger, against which it was necessary to guard, was to prevent the British and Egyptian Governments from being driven into premature action by the small but influential section of public opinion which persistently and strenuously advocated the cause of immediate reconquest. During all this period, therefore, I was careful in all my published reports to lay special stress on the desirability of inaction. Indeed, my personal opinion was that the period of enforced inaction would last longer than was actually the case. If, about the year 1886, I had been asked how long a time would probably elapse before it would be possible for the Egyptian Government to abandon a defensive and to assume an offensive policy in the valley of the Nile, I should have conjecturally fixed the period at about twenty-five years. As a matter of fact, the Egyptian army reoccupied Dongola and Berber about twelve years, and Khartoum thirteen years after their abandonment. The main reason why my forecast proved erroneous was that the conditions of the problem were changed. The Egyptian Government were not left to deal single-handed with the military and financial situation. Valuable assistance, both in men and money, was afforded by England.

Before any thought of reconquest could be entertained, two conditions had to be fulfilled. In the first place, the Egyptian army had to be rendered efficient. In the second place, not only had the solvency of the Egyptian Treasury to be assured, but funds had to be provided for the extraordinary expenditure which the assumption of an offensive policy would certainly involve.

The engagements which took place in 1888-89 in the neighbourhood of Suakin and in the Nile valley, showed that some confidence could be placed in the Egyptian army.

Financial rehabilitation and material progress in every direction proceeded at a far more rapid pace than had been anticipated. By 1895, the reconquest of the Soudan had begun to be generally discussed as an undertaking, which would probably be capable of realisation at no very remote period.

In October 1895, the question was raised in the following form. For some while previous, a scheme for holding up the water of the Nile in a large reservoir had been under consideration. By the autumn of 1895, the discussions on the technical aspects of the proposal were so far advanced as to justify the conclusion that action might before long be taken. It was at the time thought that the Egyptian Treasury could not deal simultaneously with both the reservoir and the Soudan.[1] Unless financial help were to be afforded from England, the wisest plan would be to construct the reservoir, and to postpone *sine die* the question of reoccupying the Soudan. Subsequently, the increase of revenue derived from the construction of the reservoir might, it was thought, provide funds which would enable the Soudan to be reconquered. I, therefore, asked the British Government what was their view on this subject. I was told in reply (November 15, 1895) that there was not any present prospect of the Government consenting to the despatch of a military expedition into the Soudan, and that, therefore, the financial arrangements of the Egyptian Government could be made without reference to the cost of any such expedition.

When I received this communication, I thought that the question of reconquering the Soudan had been definitely postponed for some years to come. I was wrong. I was about to receive another object-lesson on the danger of indulging in political prophecy. The utterances of the Oracle of Dodona depended on the breeze which stirred the branches of the speaking oaks around the temple of Zeus. Those of the London oracle are scarcely less uncertain. They depend on the ephemeral indications of the political barometer. When I propounded the question of whether the construction of the reservoir was to be preferred to Soudan reconquest, a steady breeze of caution was blowing amongst the political oaks of London. The oracle pronounced, in no uncertain language, in favour of the reservoir. But a sharp squall was about to come up from an opposite direction, with the result that in the twinkling of an eye the decision was reversed, and the oracle pronounced as decisively in favour of an advance into the Soudan as it had previously, under different barometrical indications, rejected any such idea.

---

[1] Eventually, an arrangement was made under which the Nile reservoir at Assouan was constructed simultaneously with the Soudan operations. The financial difficulty was met by postponing payment for the reservoir until it was completed.

The change was in some degree the outcome of the rapid growth of the Imperialist spirit, which about this time took place in England, but the more immediate cause was the turn which affairs took at Massowah. The Italians were being hard pressed by the Abyssinians. Rumours were afloat that the latter were in league with the Dervishes, who were about to attack Kassala. Early in January 1896, some discussion, which was not productive of any practical result, took place as to whether a demonstration, which might possibly relieve the pressure on the Italian forces, could not advantageously be made either from Wadi Halfa or Suakin. Eventually, on March 1, the Italian army under General Baratieri was totally defeated by King Menelek's forces in the neighbourhood of Adua.

This brought matters to a crisis. The Italian Ambassador in London urged that a diversion should be made in Italian interests. On March 12, therefore, it was suddenly decided to reoccupy Dongola. It cannot be doubted that this decision was taken and publicly announced with somewhat excessive haste. The financial and military difficulties, which would have to be encountered, were inadequately considered. But it is not on that account to be inferred that the decision was unwise. The absence of consistency, which is so frequently noticeable in the aims of British policy, is, indeed, a never-ending source of embarrassment to those on whom devolves the duty of carrying that policy into execution. A British Prime Minister appears to be in the position of the steersman of a surf-boat lying outside the mouth of an African river. He has to wait for a high wave to carry him over the bar. In the particular instance in point, it appeared at the time that it would on many grounds have been wiser to have delayed action. The arguments based on the desirability of helping the Italians, and of checking any possible advance on the part of the Dervishes, although of some weight, were not conclusive. On the other hand, the policy of eventual reconquest was sound. It is not always possible in politics to choose beforehand the time and method of action. The opportunity must be seized when it occurs. Whether the British steersman was right or wrong in selecting the Italian wave to float him over the Soudan bar, depended in a great measure on whether the operation was or was not successfully conducted. At the time, I was inclined to think the action premature, but there could be no doubt that, when once it had been decided to act, no effort should be spared to ensure success. It was also very necessary to combat the idea, which at first found some favour in London, that the operations should be limited to a mere demonstration so far as Akasha, a short distance south of Wadi Halfa. It was manifest that the advance should either not be undertaken at all, or else that it should be made with the intention of permanently occupying the country at once as far as Dongola, and eventually at least as far as Khartoum. There was something to be said in favour of delay before embarking on a forward policy. There was nothing whatever to be said in favour of trifling with the question. It was essential to discard absolutely the vacillation of the past in dealing with Soudan matters. The idea of limiting the operations to a demonstration was speedily abandoned.

When once it had been decided to advance, one of the first questions which naturally arose was how funds were to be provided for the expenses of the expedition.

Egypt has throughout the occupation benefited greatly by the tendency which exists in England towards administrative decentralisation. No serious attempt has ever been made to govern Egypt from London. It cannot be doubted that this system is wise. It has enabled us to avoid the numberless errors which generally result from the highly centralised systems generally adopted on the continent of Europe. But even a sound system may have some disadvantages, although of a nature in no serious degree to outweigh its merits. One disadvantage of the British system is that, inasmuch as the details of all Egyptian affairs are managed in Egypt, few, if any, of the officials employed in the London public offices are intimately acquainted with all the intricate windings of the Egyptian financial and administrative labyrinth. This ignorance, although ordinarily beneficent, has at times produced some strange and even embarrassing results. In this particular instance, the authorities sitting in London were aware that Egyptian finance was in a flourishing condition. Moreover, they knew that large sums of money, the savings of past years, had accumulated in the Treasury. They considered that the reconquest of Dongola was an Egyptian interest, and that the Egyptian Treasury might justly be called upon to bear the expenses. The possibility of any charge devolving on the British Treasury had not, in the first instance at all events, been adequately considered. It was held not only that the Egyptian Government ought to pay, but that they would be able to pay. The fact that the key of the Egyptian Treasure-house was in international keeping had been insufficiently appreciated, even if it had not been altogether forgotten. It was impossible to obtain access to the accumulations of past years without the consent of the Commissioners of the Debt.

Application was accordingly made to the Commissioners for a grant of £E.500,000 from the General Reserve Fund, in order to cover the expenses of the Dongola expedition. By a majority of four to two, the Commissioners granted the request. The money was paid into the Egyptian Treasury. The French and Russian Commissioners, who constituted the dissentient minority, instantly commenced an action against the Egyptian Government in the Mixed Tribunal of First Instance at Cairo.

The judgment of the Tribunal was delivered on June 8. The Egyptian Government were directed to repay the money granted by the Commissioners of the Debt. An appeal was at once made to the higher Court sitting at Alexandria, with results which will presently be described.

Simultaneously with the financial question, the composition and command of the force had to be considered.

A British battalion was sent from Cairo to Wadi Halfa, more as an indication that in case of need English help would be forthcoming than for any other reason. Some British officers were temporarily lent to the Egyptian army, but beyond this assistance, it was decided to employ only Egyptian troops in the Nile valley.

The command of the force was left to the Sirdar of the Egyptian army, Sir Herbert Kitchener. A better choice could not have been made. Young, energetic, ardently and exclusively devoted to his profession, and, as the honourable scars on his face testified, experienced in Soudanese warfare, Sir Herbert Kitchener possessed all the qualities necessary to bring the campaign to a successful issue. Like many another military commander, the bonds which united him and his subordinates were those of stern discipline on the one side, and, on the other, the respect due to superior talent and the confidence felt in the resourcefulness of a strong and masterful spirit, rather than the affectionate obedience yielded to the behests of a genial chief. When the campaign was over, there were not wanting critics who whispered that Sir Herbert Kitchener's success had been due as much to good luck as to good management. If, it was said, a number of events had happened, which, as a matter of fact, did not happen, the result might have been different. The same may be said of any military commander and of any campaign. Fortune is proverbially fickle in war. The greatest captain of ancient times spoke of "Fortuna, quae plurimum potest quum in reliquis rebus tum praecipue in bello."[1] The fact, however, is that Sir Herbert Kitchener's main merit was that he left as little as possible to chance. A first-rate military administrator, every detail of the machine, with which he had to work, received adequate attention. Before any decisive movement was made, each portion of the machine was adapted, so far as human foresight could provide, to perform its allotted task.

Sir Herbert Kitchener also possessed another quality which is rare among soldiers, and which was of special value under the circumstances then existing. He did not think that extravagance was the necessary handmaid of efficiency. On the contrary, he was a rigid economist, and, whilst making adequate provision for all essential and necessary expenditure, suppressed with a firm hand any tendency towards waste and extravagance.

---

[1] Caesar, *De Bello Civili*, iii. 68.

Although it was intended that, with the exception of one British battalion, only Egyptian troops should be employed in the advance on Dongola, at the same time, in view of the uncertainty prevailing as to the amount of resistance likely to be encountered from the Dervishes, it was thought desirable to relieve the Egyptian army temporarily of the duty of guarding Suakin, and thus enable the Sirdar to concentrate all his available forces in the valley of the Nile. An Indian force of about 2500 fighting men was, therefore, despatched to Suakin. It arrived early in June, and left in the following December.

Although these Indian troops merely performed garrison duties, they rendered services of great value; their presence at Suakin relieved both the British and Egyptian Governments of all anxiety as regarded the affairs of the Eastern Soudan.

In conformity with the plan adopted throughout this narrative, no attempt will be made to give a detailed account of the campaign of 1896. A brief statement of the principal incidents will suffice.

From the first it was manifest that one of the main difficulties was how to transport the food and stores for the army whilst on the march to Dongola. Few of those who have not been directly or indirectly concerned with the operations of war, fully appreciate the fact that at least three-fourths of the time of a military commander on active service are taken up with devising means for keeping his own troops alive. "A starving army," the Duke of Wellington wrote from Portugal, "is actually worse than none at all." When, as in the present case, the march of the army lies through a barren and desolate country, and when, in the absence of roads and wheeled transport, every pound of biscuit and every extra round of ammunition has to be carried on the backs of camels, whose slow uniform pace no eagerness on the part of the commander of the force can mend, it may readily be conceived that the difficulties of supply and transport are greatly increased. River transport could only be used in certain localities, that is to say, where the navigation of the Nile was unimpeded by rapids. The obvious solution of these difficulties was to continue in a southerly direction the railway, which already existed between Wadi Halfa and Sarras, the most distant outpost held by the Egyptian army. Akasha, some fifty miles south of Sarras, was accordingly occupied without resistance on March 20. Work on the railway, which was eventually to terminate at Kerma, a few miles short of Dongola, was at once commenced.[1]

The details of the plan of campaign were, of course, left entirely to the discretion of the Sirdar. I had, however, fully discussed the general scheme of operations with him before he left Cairo. The main point was to bring on an action at an early period of the campaign. Once victorious, even on a small scale, the Egyptian troops would acquire confidence in themselves, and the enemy would be proportionately discouraged. It was desirable not to allow the Dervishes to retreat without fighting, and thus delay any action till Dongola was reached. The smallest check had above all things to be avoided. It would be magnified in the eyes of the world, and although perhaps of slight intrinsic importance, would produce a bad moral effect. In war, the moral is to the physical as three to one. Nowhere has the truth of this celebrated Napoleonic maxim been more fully exemplified than in the successive petty campaigns which have been conducted in the Soudan. The Sirdar's generalship had, therefore, to be shown in obliging the Dervishes to fight under conditions as regards topography and relative numbers, which would be favourable to the troops under his command.

---

[1] This line, which was very roughly constructed, has now been abandoned. The produce of the Dongola Province will, in future, be conveyed to Port Soudan partly by water, and partly by a railway which extends from Abu Hamed westwards along the right bank of the Nile as far as Kereima.

The general plan of campaign arranged in Cairo was executed to the letter. By the beginning of June, the railway had been constructed to within a few miles of Akasha. A force of about 3500 Dervishes was known to be at Firket, some sixteen miles south of Akasha. It was determined to surprise this force. The utmost secrecy was preserved. On the night of June 6, two columns, numbering in all about 10,000 men, marched by convergent routes, with the object of meeting in the early morning, and surrounding the Dervish camp before a retreat could be made. An operation, the success of which depends on the opportune concentration of two separate columns at a given time and place, is always difficult of execution. The difficulties are enhanced when the march takes place at night. So skilfully, however, were all the arrangements planned and conducted, that the object which it was sought to attain was fully secured. Early on the morning of June 7, the Dervishes, completely taken by surprise, were attacked and routed with heavy loss both in killed and prisoners. The Egyptian loss was 20 killed and 80 wounded. The cavalry continued the pursuit for some miles beyond the battlefield.

Three laborious months followed the battle of Firket. Cholera broke out in the camp, and, in spite of the energy and self-sacrifice of the medical officers, was not suppressed before many valuable lives had been lost. Storms of unprecedented violence occurred, with the result that large stretches of the railway embankment were washed away and had to be reconstructed. But these and many other obstacles were eventually overcome. The dogged perseverance of the British officers, and the willing obedience of the sturdy black and fellaheen troops, were proof against excessive heat, sandstorms, and other incidents which had to be encountered in this inhospitable region.

The whole force, from General to private, deserved success, and they succeeded. After a sharp conflict at Hafir, on which occasion the gunboats, which had been dragged with much labour up the Cataracts, did excellent service, Dongola was occupied on September 23. The campaign was virtually over. At a cost of 411 lives, of whom 364 died from cholera and other diseases, and of £E.715,000 in money—a figure which bore testimony to the Sirdar's economical administration—the province of Dongola had been reclaimed from barbarism. On September 26, the furthest Egyptian outpost was fixed at Merowi, the ancient capital of the Ethiopian Queens of the Candace dynasty, situated at the foot of the Fourth Cataract.

The financial campaign lasted rather longer than the military. It was not altogether inglorious. The Judges of the Court of Appeal—or at all events the majority of them—could not altogether shake themselves free from the political electricity with which the atmosphere of Egypt was at this time so heavily charged. On December 6, the Court condemned the course adopted by the majority of the Commissioners of the Debt as illegal, and ordered the Egyptian Government to refund the money.

I had anticipated the judgment of the Court, and was, therefore, prepared to act. Immediately after its delivery, I was authorised to promise the Egyptian Government pecuniary help from England. At that time, the Egyptian Treasury happened to be full. It was desirable to act promptly and thus bar the way to international complications. On December 6, four days after the delivery of the judgment, the total sum due, amounting to £E.515,000, was—somewhat to the dismay of official circles in London—paid to the Commissioners of the Debt. Subsequently, with the consent of Parliament, the British Treasury advanced a sum of £800,000 to the Egyptian Government at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent interest.

Such, therefore, are the main political, military, and financial facts connected with the reconquest of Dongola. The episode is one to which both Englishmen and Egyptians may look back with pride and satisfaction.

I conceive that in all civilised countries—and perhaps notably in England—the theory of government is that a question of peace or war is one to be decided by politicians. The functions of the soldier are supposed to be confined, in the first place, to advising on the purely military aspects of the issues involved; and, in the second place, to giving effect to any decisions at which the Government may arrive. It has, however, often been said that the practice in this matter not unfrequently differs from the theory; that the soldier, who is generally prone to advocate vigorous action, is inclined to encroach on the sphere which should properly be reserved for the politician; that the former is often masterful and the latter weak, too easily dazzled by the glitter of arms, or too readily lured onwards by the siren voice of some strategist to acquire an almost endless set of what, in technical language, are called "keys" to some position; and that when this happens, the soldier, who is himself unconsciously influenced by a laudable desire to obtain personal distinction, practically dictates the policy of the nation without taking a sufficiently comprehensive view of national interests. Considerations of this nature have more especially been, from time to time, advanced in connection with the numerous frontier wars which have occurred in India. That they contain a certain element of truth can scarcely be doubted. My own experience in such matters leads me to the conclusion that in most semi-military, semi-political affairs there is generally an early stage when the politician, if he chooses to do so, can exercise complete and effective control over the action of the soldier, but that when once that control has been even slightly relaxed, it cannot be regained until, by the course of subsequent events, some fresh development occurs bringing with it a favourable opportunity for the reassertion of civil and political authority.

Thus, in the case of the Soudan, so long as the frontier remained at Wadi Halfa, the policy of the British and Egyptian Governments was well under control. It was possible to weigh the arguments for and against an advance, and to deliberate upon the ultimate consequences, military, political, and financial, if an advance was undertaken. But when once the first onward step had been made, the period for deliberation, even in respect to matters which were not perhaps fully within the original purview of the two Governments, or at all events of the British Government, was at an end. No one, who had seriously considered the subject, imagined for one moment that any sure halting-place could be found between Wadi Halfa and Khartoum. In the spring of 1896, it was possible to adduce reasons of some weight in favour of postponing the reconquest of the Soudan. In the autumn of the same year, it was not possible to adduce a single valid argument in favour of remaining inactive and delaying the completion of the work, which had been already begun. A certain amount of hesitation was, however, in the first instance, displayed before the inevitable conclusion was accepted that the British Government had committed themselves to a policy, which involved the reconquest of the whole of the Soudan. This hesitation was probably due more to financial timidity, and to the reluctance always felt by British Ministers to decide on anything but the issue of the moment, rather than to any failure to realise the true facts of the situation. It was not till February 5, 1897, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks Beach), speaking in the House of Commons, publicly recognised that "Egypt could never be held to be permanently secure so long as a hostile Power was in occupation of the Nile valley up to Khartoum," and that the duty of giving a final blow to the "baleful power of the Khalifa" devolved on England.

Some months before this declaration was made, the British Government were, however, practically and irrevocably committed to an offensive policy. Shortly after the capture of Dongola, the construction of a railway to connect Wadi Halfa and Abu Hamed was commenced.

Thanks to the energy and skill of the young Engineer officers to whom this important work was entrusted, two-thirds of the line were completed by August 1897. The Sirdar then determined to occupy Abu Hamed. A column under General Hunter moved from Merowi up the river. Abu Hamed was occupied,[1] on August 7, after a sharp combat, in which the Egyptian army lost 27 killed, including two British officers, and 61 wounded. Almost the whole of the Dervish force was either killed or taken prisoner. Evidence was steadily accumulating that the Egyptian soldiers were inspired by a very different spirit from that which prevailed fifteen years previously, when the troops of Arábi fled ignominiously almost at the first cannon shot.

---

[1] The interval which elapsed between the occupation of Abu Hamed and the final advance on Khartoum was a period of much anxiety. Sir Herbert Kitchener's force depended entirely on the desert railway for

On August 31, Berber, which was evacuated by the Dervishes, was occupied by the Egyptian troops. The construction of the railway from Abu Hamed to Berber was at once taken in hand.

In the meanwhile, the Italians, who but a short time before had been eager to occupy the Kassala district, were clamorous to abandon a possession, which they found expensive and of doubtful utility. On Christmas Day 1897, Kassala was occupied by an Egyptian force commanded by Colonel Parsons.

In the Nile valley, no considerable change took place in the situation for some months after the occupation of Berber. It was clear that, without the aid of British troops, Khartoum could not be retaken, but nothing definite had as yet been decided as to their employment. All hesitation was eventually removed by the force of circumstances. Towards the close of the year 1897,

---

its supplies. I was rather haunted with the idea that some European adventurer, of the type familiar in India a century and more ago, might turn up at Khartoum and advise the Dervishes to make frequent raids across the Nile below Abu Hamed, with a view to cutting the communication of the Anglo-Egyptian force with Wadi Halfa. This was unquestionably the right military operation to have undertaken; neither, I think, would it have been very difficult of accomplishment. Fortunately, however, the Dervishes were themselves devoid of all military qualities, with the exception of undaunted courage, and did not invite any European assistance. They, therefore, failed to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them. To myself, it was a great relief when the period of suspense was over. I do not think that the somewhat perilous position in which Sir Herbert Kitchener's army was unquestionably placed for some time was at all realised by the public in general.

reports were rife of an intention on the part of the Dervishes to take the offensive. Whatever doubt might exist as to the time when a further onward movement should be undertaken, there could be but one opinion as to the necessity of defending the territory already gained. Retreat was out of the question. The Dervish challenge had to be accepted. I had encouraged the Sirdar to ask for British troops directly he thought their presence necessary. On the first day of the year 1898, he sent me an historic telegram, which virtually sealed the fate of the Soudan. "General Hunter," he said, "reports confirming news of a Dervish advance. I think that British troops should be sent to Abu Hamed, and that reinforcements should be sent to Egypt in case of necessity. The fight for the Soudan would appear to be likely to take place at Berber." Four British battalions were at once sent up the Nile. The Cairo garrison was increased. Manifestly, the curtain had gone up on the last scene in the drama, which commenced with the destruction of General Hicks's army fifteen years previously.

A few days after the first demand for troops had been communicated to me, the Sirdar telegraphed that, when the final advance to Khartoum was made, he would require, in addition to the British troops about to be sent to the Soudan, another infantry brigade of four battalions, a regiment of cavalry and a battery of field artillery. His forecast of the force which would be necessary was wonderfully accurate. The force which eventually advanced on Khartoum some six months later, was precisely identical with that which Sir Herbert Kitchener specified early in January 1898. To have advanced with a smaller force would have been dangerous. A larger force would have been unwieldy, and its employment would have increased the difficulties of transport and supply. Amongst other high military qualities, the Sirdar possessed the knowledge of how to adapt his means to his end.

The threatened Dervish advance rendered necessary the despatch of British troops to the Soudan six months before the rise of the Nile allowed of free navigation. Climate, it was thought at the time, might possibly be the most dangerous enemy which would have to be encountered. Some discussion, therefore, ensued as to whether it would not be possible to send up two British brigades at once, and advance straightway on Khartoum. The idea was, however, speedily abandoned. The difficulties of transport and supply would have been enormous. At least 7000 camels, which it would have been well-nigh impossible to have obtained, would have been required. It was, therefore, decided to stand on the defensive, and to await the favourable season before striking a final blow at the Dervish stronghold at Omdurman.

By the beginning of March, a force consisting of one British and two Egyptian brigades, together with a regiment of Egyptian cavalry, 24 field and horse artillery guns, and 12 Maxims, had been concentrated between Berber and the junction of the Atbara and the Nile, where a strong entrenched camp was formed.

About the middle of February, a Dervish force of about 12,000 men, under the command of the Emir Mahmoud, which had been stationed at Metemmeh, crossed to the right bank of the river. Contradictory reports continued to be received as to the intentions of this force. It was known that dissension existed amongst the Dervish leaders. Eventually, Mahmoud abandoned the idea of moving up the right bank of the river. He struck across the desert, and established himself at Nakheila on the Atbara, some 35 miles from its mouth. On March 20, the Sirdar began to move slowly up the Atbara to meet him.

A pause of some duration then ensued. It was hoped that Mahmoud would attack, but time went on and he showed no disposition to move.

On April 1, the Sirdar telegraphed to me as follows :—

"I am rather perplexed by the situation here. Mahmoud remains stationary and his army is very badly off for supplies, and deserters keep coming in to us, though not in such large numbers as I expected. He is waiting apparently for instructions from the Khalifa before advancing or retiring. It seems to be thought by the deserters that, as a retirement would be an acknowledgment of fear, he will eventually advance. Here we are well off and healthy, with sufficient transport, fresh bread every second day, and fresh meat every day. Yesterday, I discussed the situation with Gatacre and Hunter; the former was inclined to attack Mahmoud's present position, the latter to wait here. We should have great advantage of ground if Mahmoud will advance, but if he retires without our attacking him, the opportunity will have been lost of dealing a blow by which future resistance in the Soudan would probably be considerably affected. I have little doubt of the success of our attack on his present entrenched position, though it would probably entail considerable loss. I have decided not to change present policy for three days, before which something definite will, I hope, be known. I should be glad to learn your views on the subject."

The point which struck me most in this message was that General Hunter doubted the wisdom of attacking. I knew him to be a fighting General. Moreover, he had seen Mahmoud's position. On the previous day (March 31), he had returned from a cavalry reconnaissance, as to the results of which the Sirdar had reported to me: "General Hunter was able to get within 300 yards of the enemy's trenches. Position is a strong one with Zariba (stockade) and in heavy bush; it was so thick that they were unable to get more than a partial view of the encampment. Enemy was lying thick in the trenches, which were in some places in three rows, one behind the other." I thought it not improbable that General Hunter, who well knew the strong and weak points of the Egyptian army, hesitated to attack because he was unwilling to risk what might possibly be a hand-to-hand encounter between the Egyptian soldiers and the Dervishes in the "heavy bush" to which allusion was made in this telegram. Past experience in Soudanese warfare enjoined special caution in respect to this point.

On April 2, therefore, I sent the Sirdar the following message, which represented the joint opinion of Sir Francis Grenfell and myself:—

"The following observations are not to be regarded as instructions. It is for you to form a final opinion on their value, as they are merely remarks on the position as it strikes me at a distance. In case you should think it desirable to act contrary to the view to which I incline, I have no desire to cripple your full liberty of action. I wish to assure you that, whatever you may decide to do, you will receive full support both from myself and, I am sure I may add, from the authorities at home.[1]

"You have the following arguments against an immediate attack:—

---

[1] I repeated to London the Sirdar's telegram of April 1, and at once received the following reply from Mr. Arthur Balfour, who was in charge of the Foreign Office during the temporary absence of Lord Salisbury:—

"The Sirdar may count on the support of Her Majesty's Government whichever course he decides on adopting. Unless he wishes for a military opinion, we refrain from offering any remarks which would interfere with his absolute discretion."

"(1) The extreme importance of obviating, sc far as is possible, any risk of reverse, both on local and general grounds.

"(2) That it is rather imprudent to try your force too high in view of the composition of a portion of it.

"(3) The great importance, as has been shown by all former experience of Soudanese warfare, of choosing ground for an engagement which will be favourable to the action of a disciplined and well-armed force.

"(4) The weight of Hunter's opinion. Though I have the greatest confidence in Gatacre, Hunter has more experience in Soudanese warfare, is better acquainted with the Egyptian army, and has, moreover, seen the present Dervish position. This latter is more especially a consideration of the utmost importance.

"(5) The fact that Mahmoud probably cannot stay for long where he is, and that he will be discredited and his men probably discouraged if he retires without fighting.

"You have on the other side the argument that Mahmoud's force, if he now retires without fighting, will go to strengthen the resistance to be ultimately encountered.

"The weight of this argument, though undoubted, does not appear to me sufficient to counterbalance the arguments on the other side, more especially if it be remembered that your British force will be practically doubled in the autumn, if the decisive moment is delayed till then.

"Patience, therefore, is what I am inclined to advise. I am disposed to think that you had better not attack for the present, but wait your opportunity for action and allow events to develop. The above is fully agreed in by General Grenfell, with whom I have discussed the whole question thoroughly."

Before the Sirdar had received this telegram, he sent me (April 3) the following further message:—

"The same story of privation is told by more deserters who are coming in. There is an increased desertion of blacks resulting from the capture of the women at Shendy, which is now known.

"Generals Hunter and Gatacre and myself now think an attack upon Mahmoud's position advisable. We shall probably make it on the 6th April.

"I will postpone the forward movement if your answer to my last telegram, which I have not yet received, should be against this course."

This was followed by a further telegram sent on the same day (April 3) after receipt of my reply to the first inquiry. "I will," the Sirdar said, "for the present postpone the attack on Mahmoud's position, in view of your opinion as stated in your telegram. So as to get new ground and water, we shall to-morrow move about 2½ miles farther on."

When I knew of the change in General Hunter's opinion, my own hesitation as regards attacking completely disappeared. I was unable to consult Sir Francis Grenfell, who was temporarily absent from Cairo, but I at once telegraphed to the Sirdar:—

"With reference to your telegram of yesterday, our telegrams crossed. Do not be deterred by my first telegram from attacking if, after careful consideration, you think it advisable to do so. It is very difficult to give any valuable opinion from here. In your first telegram the point which struck me most was that Hunter, who has seen the Dervish position, was adverse to an advance. He has now, I understand, come round to the other view. The case is, to my mind, materially altered by this. I must leave the decision to you, only again assuring you of full support whatever you decide."

The next day (April 4) I received the following reply:—

"The confidence which yourself and the Home authorities repose in me is greatly appreciated by me. I propose to advance more slowly and with greater deliberation than was originally my intention, and to make as sure as it is possible to do by careful reconnaissances of the success of an attack. I shall not commit myself to a general attack until the right moment has, in my opinion, arrived. The difficulty is at present to know with any certainty how long the Dervishes can hold out under the privations they are undergoing. I think that by getting nearer to them I shall have a better opportunity of satisfying myself on this point."

It was clear that a decisive engagement was imminent. I awaited the result with confidence.

Early on the morning of April 8 (Good Friday), the attack was delivered. After forty minutes' sharp fighting, Mahmoud was a prisoner, 2000 of his men lay dead in their entrenchments, others had surrendered, whilst a large number of those who escaped subsequently died of wounds or thirst in the thick bush on the left bank of the river. The victory was complete, but it cost many valuable lives. Of the British brigade, 4 officers and 104 non-commissioned officers and men, and of the Egyptian army, 5 British and 16 Egyptian officers, as well as 422 non-commissioned officers and men, were killed and wounded. The brunt of the Egyptian fighting fell on the black troops.

Some faint hopes were at one time entertained that the Dervishes would be so demoralised by the crushing defeat they had experienced on the Atbara, that no further resistance would be offered, and that the capture of Khartoum would be peacefully effected. These hopes were not destined to be realised. Had not the impostor who in cruel and depraved state reigned supreme at Khartoum promised his credulous followers, whose fate was about to excite alike pity and admiration, that, although the infidels would be allowed to advance to within a few miles of the walls of Omdurman, their skulls in countless numbers would eventually whiten the Kereri plain? It soon became clear that, in spite of the recent victory, a further application of the Bismarckian blood-and-iron policy would alone suffice to shake the heroic steadfastness with which these savage Soudanese warriors clung to an execrable cause.

I need not describe in detail the measures which were preliminary to the final effort. It will be sufficient for me to say that the first British brigade—possibly encouraged by achieved success, and buoyed up by the hope of coming excitement—bore the summer heat of the Soudan well. As had been pre-arranged, a second brigade was sent up the Nile in the course of the month of July. By the end of August, the Sirdar had concentrated a force of about 22,000 men some 40 miles south of Khartoum.

As was my custom, I had left Egypt in the middle of July, intending to return before the final blow was struck. On all grounds, it was desirable to expedite matters, but the military movements depended in a great degree on the rapidity of the rise of the Nile, a point in respect to which no very early forecast was possible. Early in August, however, the Sirdar, whose calculations of time were never once at fault, warned me that I ought to be back in Cairo by September 1. I had made all my preparations for departure, but I was unable to depart. The first news that the goal which for so many years I had striven to reach, had at last been attained, was conveyed to me in a telegram which the Queen, with her usual thoughtfulness for others, sent to a remote shooting-lodge in the north of Scotland, where I was watching the last moments of her who inspired me to write this book.

The long-expected battle took place under the walls of Omdurman on September 2. The Dervish leaders showed no tactical skill. They relied solely on the courage and devotion of their followers who, ignorant of the fearful powers of destruction which science has placed in the hands of the European, dashed recklessly against the ranks of the Anglo-Egyptian army, and were swept away in thousands by the deadly fire of the rifles and the Maxims. "The honour of the fight," said a competent eye-witness,[1] "must still go with the men who died. Our men were perfect, but the Dervishes were superb—beyond perfection. It was their largest, best, and bravest army that ever fought against us for Mahdiism, and it died worthily of the huge empire that Mahdiism won and kept so long. Their riflemen, mangled by every kind of death and torment that man can devise, clung round the black flag and the green, emptying their poor rotten, home-made cartridges dauntlessly. Their spearmen charged death at every minute hopelessly. . . . A dusky line got up and stormed forward: it bent, broke up, fell apart, and disappeared. Before the smoke had cleared, another line was bending and storming forward in the same track."

The Dervish loss was, in truth, terrible. Out of an army, whose strength was estimated at from 40,000 to 50,000 men, some 11,000 were killed, and about 16,000 wounded.

---

[1] Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, p. 282. Mr. Steevens was the correspondent of the *Daily Mail*.

On the British side, 9 officers and 122 men, and on the Egyptian side, 5 British and 9 Egyptian officers as well as 241 non-commissioned officers and men, were killed and wounded.

These brave men fell in a good cause. It will be the fault of their countrymen, in obedience to whose orders—*τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι*—they lie in their distant graves, if their blood is shed in vain.

On the afternoon of September 2, the victorious army entered the filthy stronghold of Mahdiism, where, it was said, "the stench was unbearable." Two days later (September 4), the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted with due ceremony on the walls of the ruined Palace of Khartoum, close to the spot where General Gordon fell. The sturdy and reverent Puritan spirit, which still animates Teutonic Christianity and which makes the soldier, at the moment of action, look to the guidance and protection of a Higher Power, found expression in a religious service in honour of the illustrious dead.

The Khalifa escaped. For more than a year, he wandered about the almost inaccessible wilds of Kordofan at the head of a considerable force. At length, he approached near enough to the river to enable a decisive blow to be struck. It was reserved for Sir Reginald Wingate, who succeeded Lord Kitchener as Sirdar of the Egyptian army towards the close of the year 1899, to give the final *coup de grâce* to Mahdiism. By a series of rapid and skilful marches, he surprised the Dervish camp on November 24, 1899. The Khalifa and all his principal Emirs were killed. His whole force surrendered.

The financial success was no less remarkable than the military. The total cost of the campaigns of 1896-98 was £E.2,354,000, of which £E.1,200,000 was spent on railways and telegraphs, and £E.155,000 on gunboats. The "military expenditure," properly so-called, only amounted to £E.996,000.

Of the total sum of £E.2,354,000, rather less than £E.800,000 was paid by the British, and the balance of about £E.1,554,000 by the Egyptian Treasury.

In writing this work, I have throughout endeavoured to render it as little autobiographical as possible. If I now depart in some degree from this principle, my reason is that I am unable to enforce the military lesson which, I believe, is to be derived from the Khartoum campaign without touching on my personal position. The conditions under which the campaign was conducted were, in fact, very peculiar. In official circles it was dubbed a "Foreign Office War." For a variety of reasons, to which it is unnecessary to allude in detail, the Sirdar was, from the commencement of the operations, placed exclusively under my orders in all matters. The War Office assumed no responsibility, and issued no orders. A corresponding position was occupied by the Head-Quarter Staff of the Army of Occupation in Cairo. Sir Francis Grenfell and those serving under him rendered the most willing assistance whenever it was required of them, but beyond that point their functions did not extend. The result was that I found myself in the somewhat singular position of a civilian, who had had some little military training in his youth, but who had had no experience of war,[1] whose proper functions were diplomacy and administration, but who, under the stress of circumstances in the "Land of Paradox," had to be ultimately responsible for the maintenance, and even to some extent, for the movements, of an army of some 25,000 men in the field.

---

[1] I was present for a few weeks, as a spectator, with Grant's army at the siege of Petersburg in 1864, but the experience was too short to be of much value.

That good results were obtained under this somewhat anomalous system cannot be doubted. It will not, therefore, be devoid of interest to explain how the system worked in practice, and what were the main reasons which contributed towards the success.

I have no wish to disparage the strategical and tactical ability which was displayed in the conduct of the campaign. It is, however, a fact that no occasion arose for the display of any great skill in these branches of military science. When once the British and Egyptian troops were brought face to face with the enemy, there could—unless the conditions under which they fought were altogether extraordinary—be little doubt of the result. The speedy and successful issue of the campaign depended, in fact, almost entirely upon the methods adopted for overcoming the very exceptional difficulties connected with the supply and transport of the troops. The main quality required to meet these difficulties was a good head for business. By one of those fortunate accidents which have been frequent in the history of Anglo-Saxon enterprise, a man was found equal to the occasion. Lord Kitchener of Khartoum won his well-deserved peerage because he was an excellent man of business; he looked carefully after every important detail, and enforced economy.

My own merits, such as they were, were of a purely negative character. They may be summed up in a single phrase. I abstained from a mischievous activity, and I acted as a check on the interference of others. I had full confidence in the abilities of the commander, whom I had practically myself chosen, and, except when he asked for my assistance, I left him entirely alone. I encouraged him to pay no attention to those vexatious bureaucratic formalities with which, under the slang phrase of "red tape," our military system is somewhat overburthened. I exercised some little control over the demands for stores which were sent to the London War Office, and the mere fact that those demands passed through my hands, and that I declined to forward any request unless, besides being in accordance with existing regulations—a point to which I attached but slight importance—it had been authorised by the Sirdar, probably tended to check wastefulness in that quarter where it was most to be feared. Beyond this I did nothing, and I found—somewhat to my own astonishment—that, with my ordinary very small staff of diplomatic secretaries, the general direction of a war of no inconsiderable dimensions added but little to my ordinary labours.

I do not say that this system would always work as successfully as was the case during the Khartoum campaign. The facts, as I have already said, were peculiar. The commander, on whom everything practically depended, was a man of marked military and administrative ability. Nevertheless, I venture to indulge in the hope that some useful lessons for the future may be derived from the Soudan campaigns of 1896 to 1898. It is in no spirit of conventional eulogy that I say that the British army consists of as fine material as any in the world. Apart from any question of national honour and interests, it positively chills my heart to think that the lives of the gallant young men of whom that army is mainly composed, may be needlessly sacrificed by defective organisation or guidance. This is no place to write a general essay on our military administration, but I cannot refrain from saying that, from what I have seen of the administration of the British War Office, it stood at one time in great need of improvement. It was costly. It was hampered by tradition. It was, to use an expressive French word, terribly "paperassier"; neither, for many years, was sufficient care taken, in every branch of the military service, to put the right man in the right place. In order to reform it, men rather than measures were required. I should add that there is reason to believe that, since the South African War, the administration of the War Office has been greatly improved. It is, however, impossible to speak positively on this point until its efficiency has undergone the crucial test of war.

The elation with which the news of the capture of Khartoum was received in England was in direct proportion to the despondency which chilled the heart of the British nation when, thirteen years previously, it was known that Mahdiism had triumphed and that General Gordon had been killed. Lord Kitchener, on his return to London, was received with an enthusiastic and well-deserved ovation. Indeed, one of the principal arguments in favour of recapturing Khartoum was that the British public had evidently made up its mind that, sooner or later, Khartoum had to be recaptured. It might have been possible to have postponed decisive action. It would probably have been impossible to have altogether prevented it. The national honour was not to be indefinitely baulked of the salve for which it yearned. An argument of this sort, albeit it is based on sentiment, is of intrinsic importance. In the execution of the Imperialist policy, to which England is pledged almost as a necessity of her existence, it is not at all desirable to eliminate entirely those considerations which appeal to the imaginative, to the exclusion of the material side of the national character. Moreover, whatever may be thought of the undesirability of admitting any emotional lines of thought as guides to practical action in politics, it may be regarded as certain that the politician who endeavours to run absolutely counter to the impulse of the national imagination, instead of seeking to guide it, will find that he is attempting an impossible task.

The policy pursued by the British Government in 1896 is, of course, capable of ample justification on other and less sentimental grounds than those to which allusion is made above. The effective control of the waters of the Nile from the Equatorial Lakes to the sea is essential to the existence of Egypt.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of the policy itself, or of whether the moment chosen for its execution was opportune or the reverse, it cannot be doubted that the capture of Khartoum did more than appease those sentiments of national honour which had been stung to the quick by the events of 1885. The cannon which swept away the Dervish hordes at Omdurman proclaimed to the world that on England—or, to be more strictly correct, on Egypt under British guidance—had devolved the solemn and responsible duty of introducing the light of Western civilisation amongst the sorely tried people of the Soudan.

My hope and belief is that that duty will be performed in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the Anglo-Saxon race.

# CHAPTER XXXIII

## THE NEW SOUDAN

**Question of the future political status of the Soudan—Anomalies of the British position—Objections to annexation—And to complete incorporation with Egypt—Intricacy of the problem—The two flags—Speech at Omdurman—The right of conquest—The Agreement of January 19, 1899—Its unusual nature—Its reception by Europe—Advantages of a Free Trade policy.**

THE Soudan having been reconquered, the question of the future political status of the country naturally presented itself for solution.

British policy in Egypt since the year 1882 may be said to constitute a prolonged and, so far, only partially successful effort to escape from the punishment due to original sin. The ancient adage that truth is a fellow-citizen of the gods[1] is as valid in politics as in morals. British statesmen were continually harassed by a Nemesis in the shape of the *magna vis veritatis*, which was for ever striving to shatter the rickety political edifice constructed at the time of the occupation on no surer foundations than those of diplomatic opportunism. At every turn of the political wheel, fact clashed with theory. Nevertheless, in the year 1898, of which period I am now writing, Ottoman supremacy in the Soudan, whether in the person of the Sultan or the Khedive, presented a sufficient character of solidity to necessitate its recognition as a practical fact. It could not be treated as a mere diplomatic wraith. However much it tended at times to evaporate into a phantom, its shape was still sufficiently distinguishable through the political mist to enable the outline of a kingly crown to be clearly traced. Hence, the necessity arose of cloaking the reality of fact with some more or less transparent veil of theory.

---

[1] Ἀλήθεια θεῶν ὁμόπολις.

The difference between the real and the suppositititious was brought prominently into relief immediately after the fall of Khartoum. On no occasion had a greater amount of ingenuity to be exercised in effecting an apparent reconciliation between the facts as they existed and the facts as they were, by a pardonable fiction, supposed to exist. The problem in this instance might at first sight appear to have been almost as insoluble as that of squaring the circle. But, as Lord Salisbury once remarked to me, when one gets to the foot of the hills, it is generally possible to find some pass which will lead across them. I have now to describe the pass which, with some difficulty, was eventually found through the political mountains in the particular instance under discussion. It will be seen that an arrangement was made which elsewhere might perhaps have been considered as too anomalous to stand the wear and tear of daily political existence. In Egypt, it was merely thought that one more paradox had been added to the goodly array of paradoxical creations with which the political institutions of the country already teemed.

The facts were plain enough. Fifteen years previously, Egyptian misgovernment had led to a successful rebellion in the Soudan. British rule had developed the military and financial resources of Egypt to such an extent as to justify the adoption of a policy of reconquest. But England, not Egypt, had in reality reconquered the country.

It is true that the Egyptian Treasury had borne the greater portion of the cost, and that Egyptian troops, officered, however, by Englishmen, had taken a very honourable part in the campaign. But, alike during the period of the preparation and of the execution of the policy, the guiding hand had been that of England. It is absurd to suppose that without British assistance in the form of men, money, and general guidance, the Egyptian Government could have reconquered the Soudan.

From this point of view, therefore, the annexation of the reconquered territories by England would have been partially justifiable. There were, however, some weighty arguments against the adoption of this course.

In the first place, although in the Anglo-Egyptian partnership England was unquestionably the senior partner, at the same time, Egypt had played a very useful and honourable, albeit auxiliary part in the joint undertaking. It would have been very unjust to ignore Egyptian claims in deciding on the future political status of the Soudan.

In the second place, the campaign had throughout been carried on in the name of the Khedive. If, immediately on its conclusion, decisive action had been taken in the name of the British Government acting alone, the adoption of such a course would have involved a brusque and objectionable departure from the policy heretofore pursued.

In the third place—and this consideration would, by itself, have been conclusive—it was not in the interests of Great Britain to add to its responsibilities, which were already world-wide, by assuming the direct government of another huge African territory.

These and other considerations, on which it is unnecessary to dwell, pointed to the conclusion that the Soudan should be regarded as Ottoman territory, and that, therefore, it should be governed, in accordance with the terms of the Imperial Firmans, by the Sultan's feudatory, the Khedive.

A very valid objection existed, however, to the adoption of this course. If the political status of the Soudan were to be assimilated in all respects to that of Egypt, the necessary consequence would be that the administration of the country would be burthened by the introduction of the Capitulations, and, in fact, by all the cumbersome paraphernalia of internationalism, which had done so much to retard Egyptian progress. It was manifestly absurd that British lives should be sacrificed and British treasure expended merely in order to place additional arms in the hands of Powers, some one or other of whom might at some future time become the enemy of England. Moreover, the adoption of this course would have been highly detrimental to Egyptian interests. Egypt, more than England, had suffered from the international incubus.

Hence there arose a dilemma, or, if it is permissible to coin so unusual an expression, a trilemma; for three arguments, which were in some degree mutually destructive, had to be reconciled.

In the first place, it was essential that British influence should in practice be paramount in the Soudan, in order that the Egyptians should not have conferred on them a "bastard freedom" to repeat the misgovernment of the past.

In the second place, British influence could not be exerted under the same ill-defined and anomalous conditions as those which prevailed in Egypt without involving the introduction of the baneful régime of internationalism.

In the third place, annexation by England, which would have cut the international knot, was precluded on grounds of equity and policy.

It was, therefore, necessary to invent some method by which the Soudan should be, at one and the same time, Egyptian to such an extent as to satisfy equitable and political exigencies, and yet sufficiently British to prevent the administration of the country from being hampered by the international burr which necessarily hung on to the skirts of Egyptian political existence.

It was manifest that these conflicting requirements could not be satisfied without the creation of some hybrid form of government, hitherto unknown to international jurisprudence.

The matter was discussed when I was in London in July 1898. At that time, although all saw clearly enough the objects to be attained, no very definite method for attaining them was suggested. In order, however, to give an outward and visible sign that, in the eyes of the British Government, the political status of the Soudan differed from that of Egypt, Lord Kitchener was instructed, on the capture of Khartoum, to hoist both the British and Egyptian flags side by side.[1] These orders were duly executed. Amidst the clash of arms and the jubilation over the recent victory, this measure attracted but little attention. It was not until five months later, that its importance was generally understood. On January 4, 1899, being then at Omdurman, I made a speech to the assembled Sheikhs. As I intended and anticipated, it attracted much attention. It was, indeed, meant for the public of Egypt and Europe quite as much as for the audience whom I addressed. In the course of this speech I said: "You see that both the British and Egyptian flags are floating over this house.[2] That is an indication that for the future you will be governed by the Queen of England and by the Khedive of Egypt." There could be no mistaking the significance of these words, and there was no desire that they should be mistaken. They meant that the Soudan was to be governed by a partnership of two, of which England was the predominant member.

---

[1] When Lord Kitchener found himself face to face with Captain Marchand at Fashoda, he very wisely hoisted the Egyptian flag only.

[2] The house, in the courtyard of which I spoke, had but a short time before been inhabited by one of the Khalifa's leading Emirs. At the time of my visit, it was being used as a public office.

Before making this speech, I had submitted to Lord Salisbury the project of an Agreement between the British and Egyptian Governments regulating the political status of the Soudan. It had been prepared, under my general instructions, by Sir Malcolm McIlwraith, the Judicial Adviser of the Egyptian Government. Shortly after my return to Cairo, I was authorised to sign it. It was accordingly signed by the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs and myself on January 19, 1899. I proceed to give a brief summary of the contents of this document.

The first and most important point was to assert a valid title to the exercise of sovereign rights in the Soudan by the Queen of England, in conjunction with the Khedive. There could be only one sound basis on which that title could rest. This was the right of conquest. A title based on this ground had the merit of being in accordance with the indisputable facts of the situation. It was also in accordance, if not with international law—which can obviously never be codified save in respect to certain special issues—at all events, with international practice, as set forth by competent authorities. It was, therefore, laid down in the preamble of the Agreement that it was desirable "to give effect to the claims which have accrued to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and development" of the legislative and administrative systems of the Soudan.

This principle having been once accepted, the ground was cleared for further action. The shadowy claims of Turkish suzerainty were practically, though not nominally, swept away by a stroke of the pen. Their disappearance connoted the abrogation of all those privileges which, in other parts of the Ottoman dominions, are vested in European Powers in order to check an abusive exercise of the Sultan's sovereign rights. All that then remained was to settle the practical points at issue in the manner most convenient and most conducive to the interests of the two sole contracting parties, namely, the British and the Egyptian Governments.

The 22nd parallel of latitude was fixed as the northern frontier of the new state; on the other hand, the southern frontier was left undefined. It was provided that both the British and Egyptian flags should be used throughout the Soudan;[1] that the supreme military and civil command should be vested in one officer, termed "the Governor-General of the Soudan," who was to be appointed by a Khedivial Decree on the recommendation of the British Government; that Proclamations by the Governor-General should have the force of law; that the jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals should "not extend or be recognised for any purpose whatsoever, in any part of the Soudan"; and that no foreign Consuls should be allowed to reside in the country without the previous consent of the British Government.

When this Agreement was published, it naturally attracted much attention. Diplomatists, who were wedded to conventionalities, were puzzled, and perhaps slightly shocked, at the creation of a political status hitherto unknown to the law of Europe. One of my foreign colleagues pointed out to me that he understood what British territory meant, as also what Ottoman territory meant, but that he could not understand the status of the Soudan, which was neither one nor the other. I replied that the political status of the Soudan was such as was laid down in the Agreement of January 19, 1899, and that I could give no more precise or epigrammatic definition. Again, I was asked what, in the absence of any Consuls, was to happen to Europeans who were married or buried in the Soudan? I could only reply that any European who considered it essential that his marriage or burial should be attested by a Consular representative of his country, would do well to remain in the territory lying north of the 22nd parallel of latitude.

---

[1] In the first instance, the town of Suakin was excepted from this and from some other portions of the Agreement, but this arrangement was found to cause a good deal of practical inconvenience. By a subsequent Agreement, dated July 10, 1899, the status of Suakin was in all respects assimilated to that of the rest of the Soudan.

But the splutter of amazement caused by British want of political symmetry soon died out. It is true that the Sultan murmured some few words of ineffectual protest, but no serious opposition was encountered from any quarter.

Why was this? The reasons were threefold.

In the first place, whatever fine-spun arguments might be woven from the loom of diplomatic technicality, the attitude taken up by the British Government was in substance manifestly both just and reasonable.

In the second place, their attitude was firm. It was clear that they intended to carry out their programme. The inevitable consequence ensued. No one was prepared to bell the cat, even if he felt any disposition to do so. A mere platonic protest would have caused irritation, and would have been ineffectual.

In the third place, the Powers of Europe, possibly without meaning it, paid a compliment to British rule. However much the Anglophobe press on the Continent might at times rave, it was perfectly well known that, under the British flag, Europeans—albeit they were the subjects of Powers, some of whom were animated by no very friendly spirit towards England—would be treated with perfect justice. Notably, Article VI. of the Agreement, to which at the time I attached great importance, tended greatly to allay any spirit of opposition which might otherwise have been aroused. It laid down that, in all matters concerning trade with, and residence in the Soudan, "no special privileges would be accorded to the subjects of any one or more Power"; in other words, the German, the Frenchman, the Italian and others were placed on a precisely similar commercial footing to that enjoyed by a subject of the Queen of England. Even the most militant Anglophobe could not fail to be struck by the contrast between this liberal attitude and the exclusive commercial policy adopted by other colonising European Powers. Thus, in laying the foundations of the new Soudan, a Free Trade policy—which I trust will never be dissociated from British Imperialism—formed one of the corner-stones of the political edifice.

After this fashion, the new Soudan was born. It was endowed with sufficient strength to support existence. Nevertheless, it was of necessity to some extent the child of opportunism. Should it eventually die and make place for some more robust, because more real political creation, its authors need not bewail its fate.[1]

---

[1] At a later period of this work (*vide* Chapter LX.) I shall give a brief account of the results which have so far been obtained under the system whose main features are described in this chapter.

# PART IV

# THE EGYPTIAN PUZZLE

*Quand un peuple a souffert trop longtemps, c'est tout au plus si, dans son abaissement, il a la force de baiser la main qui le sauve.*

P. J. STAHL.

*This country is a palimpsest, in which the Bible is written over Herodotus, and the Koran over that.*

LADY DUFF GORDON'S *Letters from Egypt.*

*To watch the immemorial culture of the East, slow-moving with the weight of years, dreamy with centuries of deep meditation, accept and assimilate, as in a moment of time, the science, the machinery, the restless energy and practical activity of the West is a fascinating employment.*

KENNETH J. FREEMAN, *The Schools of Hellas.*

# CHAPTER XXXIV

## THE DWELLERS IN EGYPT

The Englishman's mission — Conditions under which it was undertaken — Population of Egypt — Its mixed character — Hostility to England—Main tenets of Islam—Its failure as a social system—Degradation of women — Immutability of the law — Slavery — Intolerance—Incidents of religious belief and ceremonial—Mental and moral attributes—Seclusion of women—Polygamy—Divorce—Coarseness of literature and conversation—Filial piety—Government—Conservatism—Spirit of the laws—Language—Art—Music—Customs—Obstacles to England's mission.

At the conclusion of Chapter XVIII. of this work, the narrative was brought down to the time when Kinglake's Englishman had planted his foot on the banks of the Nile, and sat in the seats of the faithful. He came not as a conqueror, but in the familiar garb of a saviour of society. The mere assumption of this part, whether by a nation or by an individual, is calculated to arouse some degree of suspicion. The world is apt to think that the saviour is not improbably looking more to his own interests than to the salvation of society, and experience has proved that the suspicion is not unfrequently well founded. Yet assuredly the Englishman could in this case produce a valid title to justify his assumption of the part which had been thrust upon him. His advent was hailed with delight by the lawful rulers of Egypt and by the mass of the Egyptian people. The greater portion of Europe also looked upon his action without disfavour, if not with positive approval.

I say only the greater portion of Europe, for there were two notable exceptions. In the East of Europe, the Turk chafed under the reflection that the precious jewel of political opportunity had been offered to him, and that, like the "bird in the story" of Moore's song, he had "cast the fair gem far away." In the West of Europe, on the other hand, the Frenchman was looking on askance with a gradually awakening sense that he had made a mistake in allowing the Englishman to assume alone the part of the Egyptian saviour, and, when he once woke up to a sense of his error, he manifested his irritation in various ways.

With these two exceptions, which, however, for the moment hardly caused any discordant note to be sounded amidst the universal chorus of approbation, the Englishman was able to feel that none, whether in or out of Egypt, were inclined to gainsay the righteousness of his cause. More than this, one of the first qualifications necessary in order to play the part of a saviour of society is that the saviour should believe in himself and in his mission. This the Englishman did. He was convinced that his mission was to save Egyptian society, and, moreover, that he was able to save it.

How was he to accomplish his mission? Was he, in his energetic, brisk, northern fashion, to show the Egyptians what they had to do, and then to leave them to carry on the work by themselves? This is what he thought to do, but alas! he was soon to find that to fulminate against abuses, which were the growth of centuries, was like firing a cannon-ball into a mountain of mud. By the adoption of any such method, he could only produce a temporary ebullition. If he were to do any good, he must not only show what was to be done, but he must stay where he was and do it himself. Or was he, as some fiery spirits advised, to go to the other extreme? Was he to hoist the British flag over the citadel of Cairo, and sweep Pashadom, Capitulations, Mixed Tribunals, and all the heterogeneous mass of international cobwebs to be found in Egypt into the political waste-paper basket? Prudence, which bade him think of the peace of Europe, and the qualms of his political conscience, which obliged him to be mindful of his plighted word, albeit it had perhaps been too lightly pledged, stopped the way.

Being debarred from the adoption of either extreme course, the Englishman fell back on the procedure, which is endeared to him by habits of thought and national tradition. He adopted a middle course. He compromised. Far be it from his Anglo-Saxon mind to ask for that "situation nette" which is so dear to the logical Frenchman. He would assert his native genius by working a system, which, according to every canon of political thought, was unworkable. He would not annex Egypt, but he would do as much good to the country as if he had annexed it. He would not interfere with the liberty of action of the Khedivial Government, but in practice he would insist on the Khedive and the Egyptian Ministers conforming to his views. He would in theory be one of many Powers exercising equal rights, but in practice he would wield a paramount influence. He would occupy a portion of the Ottoman dominions with British troops, and at the same time he would do nothing to infringe the legitimate rights of the Sultan. He would not break his promise to the Frenchman, but he would wrap it in a napkin to be produced on some more convenient occasion. In a word, he would act with all the practical common sense, the scorn for theory, and the total absence of any fixed plan based on logical reasoning, which are the distinguishing features of his race.

I propose eventually to answer the question of how the Englishman fulfilled the mission which, if it was not conferred on him by Europe, was at all events assumed without protest from Europe. Before, however, grappling with this portion of my task, it will be as well to say something of the conditions of the problem which had to be solved. What manner of men were these Egyptians over whom, by accident rather than by design, the Englishman was called upon to rule without having the appearance of ruling? To what influences were they subject? What were their national characteristics? What part must be assigned to the foreign, that is to say, the European, Asiatic, and non-Egyptian African races resident in Egypt? What political institutions and administrative systems existed when the English stepped upon the Egyptian scene? In a word, what was the chaotic material out of which the Englishman had to evolve something like order?

These are important questions. It is essential that they should be answered before the nature of the work accomplished by England in Egypt can be understood.

Modern Egypt measures about 1000 miles from Alexandria to Wadi Halfa. Its breadth from Port Said to Alexandria is about 200 miles. The apex of the Nile Delta lies a little north of Cairo. Southward from that point, the habitable country narrows rapidly, and is in places confined to a few yards on either bank of the river. This habitable area covers an extent of 33,607 square kilometres, or about 8,000,000 acres.

Who are the inhabitants of these eight millions of acres? Of what was the raw material composed with which the Englishman had to deal?

It might naturally be supposed that, as we are dealing with the country called Egypt, the inhabitants of whom the statesman and the administrator would have almost exclusively to take account would be Egyptians. Any one who is inclined to rush to this conclusion should remember that Egypt, as Lord Milner has stated in his admirable work, is the Land of Paradox. If any one walks down one of the principal streets of London, Paris, or Berlin, nine out of ten of the people with whom he meets bear on their faces evidence, more or less palpable, that they are Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Germans. But let any one who has a general acquaintance with the appearance and physiognomy of the principal Eastern races try if he can give a fair ethnological description of the first ten people he meets in one of the streets of Cairo, that "maze of old ruin and modern café, that dying Mecca and still-born Rue de Rivoli," as it has been aptly termed by Sir William Butler.[1] He will find it no easy matter, and with all his experience he may not improbably make many mistakes.

The first passer-by is manifestly an Egyptian fellah who has come into the city to sell his garden produce. The headgear, dress, and aquiline nose of the second render it easy to recognise a Bedouin who is perhaps come to Cairo to buy ammunition for his flint-lock gun, but who is ill at ease amidst urban surroundings, and will hasten to return to the more congenial air of the desert. The small, thick-lipped man with dreamy eyes, who has a far-away look of one of the bas-reliefs on an ancient Egyptian tomb, but who Champollion and other *savants* tell us is not the lineal descendant of the ancient Egyptians,[2] is presumably a Coptic clerk in some Government office. The face, which peers somewhat loweringly over a heavy moustache from the window of a passing brougham, is probably that of some Turco-Egyptian Pasha. The man with a bold, handsome, cruel face, who swaggers by in long boots and baggy trousers, must surely be a Circassian. The Syrian money-lender, who comes next, will get out of his way, albeit he may be about to sell up the Circassian's property the next day to recover a loan of which the capital and interest, at any ordinary rate, have been already paid twenty times over. The green turban, dignified mien, and slow gait of the seventh passer-by denote some pious Sheikh, perhaps on his way to the famous University of El-Azhar. The eighth must be a Jew, who has just returned from a tour in Asia Minor with a stock of embroideries, which he is about to sell to the winter tourists. The ninth would seem to be some Levantine nondescript, whose ethnological status defies diagnosis; and the tenth, though not easily distinguishable from the latter class, is in reality one of the petty traders of whom Greece is so prolific, and who are to be found dotted all over the Ottoman dominions. Nor is the list yet exhausted. Armenians, Tunisians, Algerians, Soudanese, Maltese, half-breeds of every description, and pure-blooded Europeans pass by in procession, and all go to swell the mass, if not of Egyptians, at all events of dwellers in Egypt.

---

[1] *The Campaign of the Cataracts*, p. 95.

[2] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, p. 15. Champollion le Jeune's opinion, quoted by M. Maspero, is as follows: "Les Coptes sont le résultat du mélange confus de toutes les nations qui successivement ont dominé l'Égypt. On a tort de vouloir retrouver chez eux les traits de la vieille race." Mr. S. Lane Poole, however, says

The compiler of the census of 1897 appears to have felt a difficulty which must surely have weighed still more heavily on those amateur politicians who, like Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, have from time to time advocated a policy of Egypt for the true Egyptians. Who, in fact, is a true Egyptian? The compiler

---

(*Cairo*, p. 205): "Copts, Gypts, Egyptians, they are, indeed, the true survivors of the people whom Pharaoh ruled, and who built the Pyramids of Giza."

of the census very wisely did not attempt to define the term; he must have been aware that precise definition was impossible. At the same time, the instincts of his craft appear to have rebelled at the idea of lumping the whole population of Egypt, exclusive of Europeans, into one seething statistical mass and calling them Egyptians. So he divided the Egyptians as well as he could into, first, natives; secondly, persons born in other parts of the Ottoman dominions, who, as a matter of fact, are for the most part Syrians and Armenians; thirdly, semi-sedentary Bedouins, that is to say, the hybrid between the fellah and the Bedouin, who has one foot on the cultivated land of the Nile Valley, and the other on the desert; and, fourthly, Nomad Bedouins, who are Bedouins pure and simple.

The census of 1897[1] informs us, therefore, that at that time there were, in round numbers, 9,621,000 Ottoman subjects dwelling in Egypt, who were divided into the following categories:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Natives . . . . | 9,008,000 |
| Persons born, not in Egypt, but in other parts of the Ottoman Empire | 40,000 |
| Semi-sedentary Bedouins . . | 485,000 |
| Nomad Bedouins . . . | 88,000 |
| Total . | 9,621,000[2] |

These, with 113,000 Europeans and protected subjects of European Powers, brought the dwellers in Egypt, male and female, up to a grand total of 9,734,000.

---

[1] I am obliged to use the 1897 figures, as those of the census of 1907 are not yet available. I am, however, informed that the provisional figures work out to a total of about 11,206,000.

[2] According to the census of 1882, the population was 6,814,000. There was, therefore, including Europeans, an increase of 43 per cent in fifteen years. It is, however, generally supposed that the census of 1882, which was conducted with very inadequate machinery, underestimated the population at the time.

The Englishman, I have said, came to Egypt with the fixed idea that he had a mission to perform, and, with his views about individual justice, equal rights before the law, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and similar notions, he will not unnaturally interpret his mission in this sense, that he is to benefit the mass of the population. There lie those nine or ten million native Egyptians at the bottom of the social ladder, a poor, ignorant, credulous, but withal not unkindly race, being such as sixty centuries of misgovernment and oppression by various rulers, from Pharaohs to Pashas, have made them. It is for the civilised Englishman to extend to them the hand of fellowship and encouragement, and to raise them, morally and materially, from the abject state in which he finds them. And the Englishman looks towards the scene of other administrative triumphs of world-wide fame, which his progenitors have accomplished. He looks towards India, and he says to himself, with all the confidence of an imperial race,—I can perform this task; I have done it before now; I have poured numberless blessings on the heads of the ryots of Bengal and Madras, who are own cousins to the Egyptian fellaheen; these latter also shall have water for their fields, justice in their law-courts, and immunity from the tyranny under which they have for so long groaned; the reign of Pashadom shall cease.

But the Englishman will find, when he once applies himself to his task, that there is, as it were, a thick mist between him and the Egyptian, composed of religious prejudice, antique and semi-barbarous customs, international rivalry, vested interests, and aspirations of one sort or another, some sordid, others, it may be, not ignoble but incapable of realisation. He will find, in the first place, that those 113,000 Europeans, although constituting only 1·16 per cent of the total population, represent the greater part of the wealth and intelligence, and no small proportion of the rascality and aggressive egotism of the country; further, that whether their views be right or wrong, just or unjust, these 113,000 elect often have the power to enforce their behests, for are they not the salt of the Egyptian earth, the Brahmins of Egypt, and have they not behind them the diplomatists, and it may even be, the soldiers and sailors of every State of Europe? In this respect, the Englishman will find that he has to deal with a problem for the solution of which his Indian experience will avail him but little. In the second place, he will find that a majority of the large landowners and all the most important officials are Turco-Egyptians in various stages of Egyptianisation, who enjoy privileges which are wholly inconsistent with Benthamite principles, notably the privilege of oppressing those 9,000,000 Egyptians whose woes wring the heart of their English would-be benefactor. Obviously, the Englishman is not likely to get much sympathy or support from this quarter. In the third place, he will find a host of minor officials, many of whom are of non-Egyptian origin, and who, for various reasons, are indisposed to co-operate loyally in the improvement of their country at the hand of the just, well-intentioned, but somewhat unsympathetic alien. In fact, the Englishman will soon find that the Egyptian, whom he wishes to mould into something really useful with a view to his becoming eventually autonomous, is merely the rawest of raw material, and that the principal tools, with which he will have to work, and on which the excellence of the finished article must largely depend, may be

British, French, Turkish, Syrian, Armenian, or of half-a-dozen other nationalities, but they will rarely be Egyptian.[1]

This, therefore, is the central feature of the local situation which the English found in existence when they took in hand the solution of the Egyptian question. The Egyptians, properly so called, were numerous, but were, from the political and superior administrative point of view, little more than ciphers. The main difficulties of the English politician and of the English administrator will arise from the fact that the minority, consisting of non-Egyptians or of what, for want of a better term, may in some instances be called semi-Egyptians, were relatively powerful, and not unfrequently, for one reason or another, hostile.

I have said that religious prejudice constituted one of the barriers which were interposed between the Englishman and the Egyptian; for, on the one hand, besides being one of the European family in respect to general civilisation, the Englishman, amidst many deviations from the path, will strive, perhaps to a greater extent than any other member of that family, to attain to a high degree of eminently Christian civilisation; that is to say, although he will in his official capacity discard any attempt to proselytise, he will endeavour to inculcate a distinctly Christian code of morality as the basis for the relations between man and man. He is, indeed, guided in this direction by the lights, which have been handed down to him by his forefathers, and by the Puritan blood which still circulates in his veins.

The Egyptian, on the other hand, holds fast to the faith of Islam, that noble monotheism, belief in which takes to a great extent the place of patriotism in Eastern countries,[1] and which serves as a common bond of union to all Moslems from Delhi to Fez, from Stamboul to Zanzibar, as they turn to pray towards the cradle of their creed.[2]

---

[1] I am, of course, speaking here of the state of things which existed in 1882. Since then, the proportion of Egyptian employés in the Government service has very largely increased.

And what are the main tenets of this creed, which has exercised so mighty an influence on the destinies of mankind? They are set forth in the Sacred Book of the Moslems. They have been explained in many languages by learned men of many nations. But their original grandeur and simplicity have never been more eloquently expounded than by those early followers of the Prophet, who threw themselves at the feet of the Christian King of Abyssinia to implore his protection against the persecution of the Koreish Arabs. "O King," they said, "we lived in ignorance, idolatry, and unchastity; the strong oppressed the weak; we spoke untruth; we violated the duties of hospitality. Then a Prophet arose, one whom we knew from our youth, with whose descent and conduct and good faith and truth we are all well acquainted. He told us to worship one God, to speak truth, to keep good faith, to assist our relations, to fulfil the rights of hospitality, and to abstain from all things impure, ungodly, unrighteous. And he ordered us to say prayers, give alms, and to fast. We believed in him; we followed him."[3]

These are the main tenets of the Moslem faith.[4]

---

[1] Some observers think that association with Europe has to some extent resulted in substituting the bond of nationality for that of religion in Moslem countries. Thus M. Le Chatelier, in a work published in 1888, and entitled *Islam au XIXème Siècle,* says (p. 186): "L'évolution contemporaine de l'Europe a introduit dans celle de l'Islam un facteur commun, le développement de l'esprit de nationalité, qu'elle a d'ailleurs propagé dans le monde entier." Recent events, not only in Egypt but elsewhere, tend rather to confirm M. Le Chatelier's view.

[2] See *Studies in a Mosque,* p. 96.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 48, and Muir's *Life of Mahomet,* p. 89.

[4] Mr. Badger, in his admirable article on Mohammed in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography,* says: "Surah CXII., the shortest chapter of

To the many hundreds of millions who have embraced Islam, and more especially to the poor amongst them, the adoption of these tenets has afforded not only spiritual consolation but material blessings in this world, as well as the hope of immortality in the world to come. It cannot be doubted that a primitive society benefits greatly by the adoption of the faith of Islam.[1] Sir John Seeley, speaking of what he aptly terms "the state-building power of religion," says: "Wherever a barbarous tribe has raised itself at all above the level of barbarism and taken any development, it has done so usually through conversion to Islam."[2]

Unfortunately, the great Arabian reformer of the seventh century was driven by the necessities of his position to do more than found a religion. He endeavoured to found a social system, with results which are thus stated by a close observer of the strong and weak parts of Islamism. "As a religion," Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole says, "Islam is great; it has taught men to worship one God with a pure worship who formerly worshipped many gods impurely. As a social system, it is a complete failure."[3]

The reasons why Islam as a social system has been a complete failure are manifold.

First and foremost, Islam keeps women in a position of marked inferiority.[4] In the second place, Islam, speaking not so much through the Koran as

---

the Koran, is regarded by Moslems as containing the essence of the whole book: 'Say, God is one; God the eternal; He begetteth not, neither is He begotten; neither is there any one like Him.'"

[1] "L'Islam est un progrès pour le nègre qui l'adopte."—Renan, *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel,* vol. i. p. 60.

[2] *Introduction to Political Science,* p. 63. Miss Kingsley (*West African Studies,* ch. v.) makes some very apposite remarks on the adaptability of Islamism to the present condition of African society.

[3] *Studies in a Mosque,* p. 101.

[4] "The degradation of women in the East is a canker that begins its destructive work early in childhood, and has eaten into the whole system of Islam."—Stanley Lane-Poole, *Islam, a Prelection delivered before the University of Dublin.*

through the traditions which cluster round the Koran, crystallises religion and law into one inseparable and immutable whole, with the result that all elasticity is taken away from the social system. If to this day an Egyptian goes to law over a question of testamentary succession, his case is decided according to the antique principles which were laid down as applicable to the primitive society of the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century. Only a few years ago (1890), the Grand Mufti of Cairo, who is the authoritative expounder of the law of Islam, explained how bands of robbers should be treated who were found guilty of making armed attacks on a village by night. The condemned criminal might be punished in six different ways. He might have his right hand and left foot cut off and then be decapitated; or he might be mutilated, as before, and then crucified; or he might be mutilated, decapitated, and eventually crucified; or he might be simply decapitated or simply crucified, or decapitated first and crucified afterwards. Full details were given in the Mufti's report of the mode of crucifixion which was to be adopted. The condemned person was to be attached to a cross in a certain manner, after which "il sera percé à la mamelle gauche par une lance, qui devra être remuée dans la blessure jusqu'à ce que la mort ait lieu."[1] These terrible penalties could not, however, for some reason, which at first sight appears incomprehensible,[2] be incurred if a dumb man were one of the band of robbers. In this latter case the *lex talionis* was to be applied. The next-of-kin of any one who might have been murdered could demand a life for a life, or could claim blood-money in lieu of expiation.

---

[1] The original was, of course, in Arabic, but the French translation, which is quoted above, was published in the Official Journal of the Egyptian Government.

[2] See p. 136, note.

The rigidity of the Sacred Law has been at times slightly tempered by well-meaning and learned Moslems who have tortured their brains in devising sophisms to show that the legal principles and social system of the seventh century can, by some strained and intricate process of reasoning, be consistently and logically made to conform with the civilised practices of the twentieth century.[1] But, as a rule, custom based on the religious law, coupled with exaggerated reverence for the original lawgiver, holds all those who cling to the faith of Islam with a grip of iron from which there is no escape. "During the Middle Ages," it has been truly said,[2] "man lived enveloped in a cowl." The true Moslem of the present day is even more tightly enveloped by the Sheriât.

In the third place, Islam does not, indeed, encourage, but it tolerates slavery. "Mohammed found the custom existing among the Pagan Arabs; he minimised the evil."[3] But he was powerless to abolish it altogether. His followers have forgotten the discouragement, and have very generally made the permission to possess slaves the practical guide for their conduct. This is another fatal blot in Islam.

---

[1] A curious instance of the processes of reasoning sometimes adopted in order to evade the rigidity of the Sacred Law is to be found in the provision, to which allusion is made above, that the barbarous punishments of mutilation and crucifixion cannot be inflicted on a band of brigands if a dumb man forms one of the band. The reason is rather abstruse. It appears that certain classes of offences, such as robbery, adultery, etc., are specially provided for by the Koran, the penalties being generally excessively severe, and, as no mitigation is permissible, those penalties have to be applied in their entirety. Thus, for brigandage the penalty is mutilation, crucifixion, etc., as described by the Mufti. But, in order, in some degree, to leave a loophole for escape from the compulsory infliction of these punishments in all cases, the law doctors discovered that it was only intended that they should be inflicted when all the parties were quite sound and in a state to speak in their own defence. For this reason, the presence of a child, an idiot, or a dumb man enables the Sacred Law to be put aside and a milder kind of punishment inflicted on the whole party under the ordinary law, *i.e.* the will of the Sovereign or of his delegate, the Kadi. If I understand rightly, the Mufti did not mean that the dumb man saved all his associates from punishment, but only that they were thereby transferred from the province of the Divine law to that of their human authorities.

[2] Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 14.

[3] Syed Ameer Ali, *Personal Law of the Mohammedans*, p. 38.

*ἥμισυ γάρ τ᾽ ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνυται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς*
*ἀνέρος, εὖτ᾽ ἄν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἦμαρ ἕλῃσιν.*

The Christian, to his shame be it said, has before now been not only a slave-owner, but, which is much worse, a slave-hunter. The Christian religion has, however, never sanctioned slavery.

Lastly, Islam has the reputation of being an intolerant religion, and the reputation is, from some points of view, well deserved, though the bald and sweeping accusation of intolerance requires qualification and explanation. The followers of the Prophet have, indeed, waged war against those whom they considered infidels. They are taught by their religious code that any unbelievers, who may be made prisoners of war, may rightly be enslaved.[1] Moreover, sectarian strife has not been uncommon. Sunni has fought against Shiah. The orthodox Moslem has mercilessly repressed the followers of Abdul Wahab. Further, apostasy from Islam is punishable with death, and it is not many years ago that the sentence used to be carried into effect.[2] On the other hand, the annals of Islam are not stained by the history of an Inquisition.[1] More than this, when he is not moved by any circumstances specially calculated to rouse his religious passions, the Moslem readily extends a half-contemptuous tolerance to the Jew and the Christian.[2] In the villages of Upper Egypt, the Crescent and the Cross, the Mosque and the Monastery, have stood peacefully side by side for many a long year. Nevertheless, the general tendency of Islam is to stimulate intolerance and to engender hatred and contempt not only for polytheists, but also, although in a modified form, for all monotheists who will not repeat the formula which acknowledges that

---

[1] The Hidayah, which is regarded by the Sunnis as the standard commentary on the Sheriât, or religious code, says: "The Imam, with respect to captives, has it in his choice to slay them, because the Prophet put captives to death, and also because slaying them terminates wickedness; or, if he chooses, he may make them slaves, because by enslaving them the wickedness of them is remedied, and at the same time the Moslems reap an advantage."

[2] Lane saw a woman stripped, strangled, and thrown into the Nile for apostasy (*Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 136). To the best of my belief, the last person executed for apostasy in virtue of a decision of an Ottoman law-court was an Armenian, who in 1843 adopted the faith of Islam, subsequently repented, and returned to the Christian Church. Lord Stratford, who was then Ambassador at Constantinople, rose in

---

all his wrath, and, after some sharp diplomatic passages, extracted a declaration from the Porte that for the future no apostate should be put to death. The incident is related in Chapter XVIII. of the *Life of Stratford Canning.* Religious freedom was further assured by Articles X.-XII. of the Khatt-i-Humayoun of February 28, 1856, which was issued after the Crimean War.

I once asked a high Moslem authority in Cairo how he reconciled the fact that an apostate could now no longer be executed with the alleged immutability of the Sacred Law. The casuistry of his reply would have done honour to a Spanish Inquisitor. The Kadi, he said, does not recognise any change in the Law. He would, in the case of an apostate, pronounce sentence of death according to the Law, but it was for the secular authorities to carry out the sentence. If they failed in their duty, the sin of disobeying the Law would lie on their heads. Cases of apostasy are very rare, but during my tenure of office in Egypt, I had to interfere once or twice to protect from maltreatment Moslems who had been converted to Christianity by the American missionaries.

[1] Mr. Pickthall (*Folk-Lore of the Holy Land*, p. xv), speaking of the capture of Jerusalem by the Khalif Omar, says: "Omar's severity towards the Christians was so much below their anticipations that he figures in the popular memory almost as a benefactor of their religion. They were deprived of their church-bells, but kept their churches; and if large numbers of them embraced El Islâm, it was through self-interest (or conviction) and not at the point of the sword, as has been represented. Indeed, the toleration displayed by the Moslems towards the vanquished, though less than we should practise nowadays, is without a parallel in Europe till many centuries later. It was not emulated by the Crusaders, who, rushing to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the clutch of the 'foul Paynim,' were astonished to find it in the hands of Christians, whom, to cloak their disconcertion, they denounced as heretics."

[2] Upon the toleration accorded to the Jews by Moslems, see Milman's *History of the Jews*, bk. xxiii.

Mohammed was indeed the Prophet of God. Neither can this be any matter for surprise. The faith of Islam admits of no compromise. The Moslem is the antithesis of the pantheistic Hindoo. His faith is essentially exclusive. Its founder launched fiery anathemas against all who would not accept the divinity of his inspiration, and his words fell on fertile ground, for a large number of those who have embraced Islam are semi-savages, and often warlike savages, whose minds are too untrained to receive the idea that an honest difference of opinion is no cause for bitter hatred. More than this, the Moslem has for centuries past been taught that the barbarous principles of the *lex talionis* are sanctioned, and even enjoined by his religion. He is told to revenge himself on his enemies, to strike them that strike him, to claim an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Islamism, therefore, unlike Christianity, tends to engender the idea that revenge and hatred, rather than love and charity,[1] should form the basis of the relations between man and man; and it inculcates a special degree of hatred against those who do not accept the Moslem faith. "When ye encounter the unbelievers," says the Koran, "strike off their heads until ye have made a great slaughter among them, and bind them in bonds. . . . O true believers, if ye assist God, by fighting for his religion, he will assist you against your enemies; and will set your feet fast; but as for the infidels, let them perish; and their works God shall render vain. . . . Verily, God will introduce those who believe and do good works into gardens beneath which rivers flow, but the unbelievers indulge themselves in pleasures, and eat as beasts eat; and their abode shall be hell fire."[1] It is true that when Mohammed denounced unbelievers he was alluding more especially to the pagans who during his lifetime inhabited the Arabian Peninsula, but later commentators and interpreters of the Koran applied his denunciations to Christians and Jews, and it is in this sense that they are now understood by a large number of Mohammedans. Does not the word "Ghazi," which is the highest title attainable by an officer of the Sultan's army, signify "one who fights in the cause of Islam; a hero; a warrior; one who slays an infidel"?[2] Does not every Mollah, when he recites the Khutbeh at the Mosque, invoke Divine wrath on the heads of unbelievers in terms which are sufficiently pronounced at all times, and in which the diapason of invective swells still more loudly when any adventitious circumstances may have tended to fan the flame of fanaticism? Should not every non-Moslem land be considered in strict parlance a Dar-el-Harb, a land of warfare?[3] When principles such as these have been dinned for centuries past into the ears of Moslems, it can be no matter for surprise that a spirit of intolerance has been generated.

---

[1] "Le Christianisme a été intolérant, mais l'intolérance n'est pas un fait essentiellement chrétien. C'est un fait juif."—Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 425.

The Englishman in Egypt will find that, in the practical everyday work of administration, this intolerant spirit, though it may not always find expression in word or deed, is an obstacle to the reformer of which it is difficult to overrate the importance. He will find that he has not, as in India, to deal with a body of Moslems, numerically strong, but whose power of cohesion is enfeebled from their being scattered broadcast amongst a population five times as numerous as themselves, who hold to another and more tolerant creed. He will have to deal with a smaller but more compact body of Moslems, who are more subject to the influences of their spiritual leaders than their co-religionists in India. The Englishman will do his best under these circumstances. He will scrupulously abstain from interference in religious matters. He will be eager to explain that proselytism forms no part of his political programme. He will look the other way when greedy Sheikhs swallow up the endowments left by pious Moslems for charitable purposes. His Western mind may, indeed, revolt at the misappropriation of funds, but he would rather let these things be than incur the charge of tampering with any quasi-religious institution. For similar reasons, he will abstain from laying his reforming hand on the iniquities of the Kadi's courts. The hired perjurer will be allowed full immunity to exercise his profession,[1]

---

[1] On the other hand, Surah ii. 257, says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." The numerous contradictory utterances and inconsistencies of the Koran cannot be reconciled. They are probably due to the fact that Mohammed's teaching was greatly influenced by passing events as well as by the personal episodes of his own career.

[2] *Hughes' Dictionary of Islam*, p. 139.

[3] There is, however, considerable difference of opinion amongst Moslem authorities as to the precise definition of a Dar-el-Harb. The question is one of considerable importance to the rulers of India. It is discussed in Sir William Hunter's work entitled *Indian Musulmans.* The highest Moslem authorities have expressed opinions that India is a Dar-el-Islam, and not a Dar-el-Harb. Hence, it is not incumbent on the Moslems of India to carry on a Jihad against the infidels. The truth is that when, twelve centuries ago, these words came into use, it was never contemplated that sixty millions of Moslems would be living peacefully under the rule of a Christian King or Queen. Hence, some *modus vivendi* had to be found, which would bring the facts of the

---

present day into apparent conformity with the doctrines of Islam. The law doctors of Northern India wisely laid down the principle that no Jihad was justifiable unless it was likely to be successful. This view was conformable to the worldly interests both of the rulers of India and of their Moslem subjects, but there is a somewhat secular ring about an utterance of this sort. It commends itself to the politician rather than to the uncompromising divine. Even the exponents of unbending Islam seem, however, prepared at times to admit the principle *qu'il y a des accommodements avec le ciel.*

[1] A number of false witnesses ply, or, at all events, used to ply for hire about the precincts of the Kadi's court at Cairo. They are prepared, on payment, to swear to anything. I have been informed that when the British Government took over the administration of Cyprus

for the Englishman is informed that the criminal cannot be brought to justice without shaking one of the props which hold together the religious edifice founded twelve centuries ago by the Prophet of Arabia. He did not for many years allow a murderer, whose offence was clearly proved, to be hanged because Islam declared—or was supposed by many ill-informed Moslems to declare—that such an act is unlawful unless the murderer confesses his crime, or unless the act is committed in the presence of two witnesses; and he accepted this principle in deference to Moslem sentiment, with the full knowledge that, in accepting it, he was giving a direct encouragement to perjury and the use of torture to extract evidence.[1] In the work of civil juridical reform, he will bear with all the antiquated formalities of the Mehkemeh Sheraieh. He will scrupulously respect all Moslem observances. He will generally, amidst some twinges of his Sabbatarian conscience, observe Friday as a holiday, and perform the work of the Egyptian Government on Sunday.[2] He will put on slippers over his boots when he enters a Mosque. He will pay his respects to Moslem notabilities during the fast of Ramazan and the feast of Bairam. He will, when an officer of the army, take part in

---

it was found that the profession of false witness had been officially recognised by the Turkish Government. Perjurers took out licenses for the exercise of their profession. A good account of the proceedings of these professional witnesses is given in Senior's *Journal in Turkey and Greece*, p. 80.

It ought in fairness to be added that hired perjurers existed at one time in England. The literature of the Elizabethan period abounds with allusions to "Knights of the Post," as they were then termed.

[1] The law on this subject was eventually changed. After prolonged inquiry, it was ascertained beyond doubt that the view commonly held in Egypt was not in conformity with Moslem law or tradition. In 1897, therefore, a law was passed in virtue of which the special provision as regards the evidence necessary in order to permit of a capital punishment being inflicted in a case of murder was abolished.

[2] Some British officials have declined to work on Sundays, and have made up the hours thus lost by working extra hours on week-days.

Moslem religious ceremonies, fire salutes at religious festivals, and sometimes expose his life under the burning rays of an African sun rather than substitute a Christian helmet for the tarboush, which is the distinctive mark of the Moslem soldier in the Ottoman dominions. And when he has done all these things and many more of a like nature, they will only avail him so far that they may perhaps tend to obviate any active eruption of the volcano of intolerance. They will acquire for him a grudging acknowledgment that he is content to let well alone, and that he does not endeavour to evangelise at the point of the bayonet. He will not be able to inspire any strong feeling of gratitude beyond this limit. The English engineer may give the Egyptian fellah water for his fields, and roads and railways to enable him to bring his produce to market; the English financier may afford him fiscal relief beyond his wildest hopes; the English jurist may prevent his being sent to death or exile for a crime of which he is innocent; the English schoolmaster may open to him the door of Western knowledge and science; in a word, his material comfort may be increased, his intellect may be developed, and his moral being elevated under British auspices, but the Egyptian Moslem, albeit he hates and fears the Turkish Pasha, that he recognises the benefits conferred on him by the Englishman and acknowledges his superior ability, can never forget the fact that the Englishman wears a hat whilst he, himself, wears a tarboush or a turban. Though he accepts the benefits willingly enough, he is always mindful that the hand which bestows them is not that of a co-religionist, and it is this which affects him far more than the thought that the Englishman is not his compatriot. Do what he will, through the combined channels of sympathy and of reason, the Englishman will never be able to break down this barrier, that whereas both he and the Egyptian Moslems are prepared to aver that there is no God but God, the Egyptian is, and the Englishman is not prepared to subscribe to the latter part of the formula, which lays down that Mohammed was the Prophet of God. "Islam is all in all to the fellah; the unbelievers he looks on as a miserable minority; and it is only the unpleasant fact that they cannot be crushed at present that prevents his crushing them, and asserting the supremacy of Islam."[1]

Neither is this the sole barrier which is interposed between the two races. Look, not only to the leading dogma, but to the incidents of Divine worship associated with Islamism as opposed to those of Christianity. Examine the consequences which the degradation of women brings in its train. Consider the mental and moral attributes, the customs, art, architecture,[2] language, dress, and tastes of the dark-skinned Eastern as compared with the fair-skinned Western. It will be found that on every point they are the poles asunder.[3] It would seem, indeed, as if even in the most trivial acts of life some unfelt impulse, for which no special reason can be assigned, drives the Eastern to do the exact opposite to that which the Western would do under similar circumstances.[4]

---

[1] W. Flinders Petrie, *Ten Years Digging in Egypt*, p. 180.

[2] Dean Milman says: "The East, having once wrought out its architectural type and model, settled down in unprogressive, uncreative acquiescence, and went on copying that type with servile and almost undeviating uniformity. In the West, within certain limits, with certain principles, and with a fixed aim, there was freedom, progression, invention."—*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. 270.

[3] Sir George Cornewall Lewis (*On the Method of Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. ii. ch. xvi.) has some interesting remarks on this subject.

[4] An Englishman, who was a keen observer of Egyptian manners and customs, told me that, as a test of intelligence, he once asked a fellah to point to his left ear. A European would certainly have taken hold

It will be interesting to dwell on this point at somewhat greater length.

Consider first differences, some of great, some of trifling importance, which hinge on religious belief and ceremonial.

The Christian clings to the hope that, in the spiritual heaven to which he looks forward, he will meet with those with whom he has been associated in this world. This hope is, indeed, one of the most beautiful and consolatory features of his faith. The Moslem's belief in immortality is dissociated from any ideas of this nature. The Houris, who people the Paradise which he hopes to gain, were never inhabitants of this world.

The Christian prays for certain qualities to be granted to him, or for certain specific objects to be accomplished. The Moslem generally utters certain set formulæ of adoration; he rarely prays for specific objects.

The Christian will say his daily prayers in private. The Moslem will say them in public. He has no false shame about bearing public testimony to the fact that, in every act he performs, he is in the hands of God. "God," said an English divine who had made a study of Eastern religions, "is present to Mohammedans in a sense in which He is rarely present to us amidst the hurry and confusion of the West."[1]

The Christian, when he fasts at all, fasts moderately by day and sleeps at night. The Moslem, during his fast, neither eats, nor drinks, nor smokes by day, but indulges without restraint at night.

The Christian religion encourages the fine arts,

---

of the lobe of his left ear with his left hand. The Egyptian passed his right hand over the top of his head and with that hand grasped the upper part of his left ear.

[1] Dean Stanley's *Lectures on the Eastern Church*, p. 334.

and draws a potent influence from them. The Mohammedan religion is iconoclastic. Painting and sculpture, when they represent any living creature, are condemned. Music is never heard in a Mosque.

The Christian will sometimes be cleanly because he thinks that it conduces to his health and comfort. He puts cleanliness next to godliness, but does not associate the two ideas together. The Moslem will be cleanly after a fashion because his religion enjoins him to be so.

Turn now to the mental and moral attributes of the two races. It will be found that the antitheses are striking.

Sir Alfred Lyall once said to me: "Accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind. Every Anglo-Indian official should always remember that maxim." Want of accuracy, which easily degenerates into untruthfulness,[1] is, in fact, the main characteristic of the Oriental mind.

The European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of ambiguity; he is a natural logician, albeit he may not have studied logic; he loves symmetry in all things; he is by nature sceptical and requires proof before he can accept the truth of any proposition; his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism. The mind of the Oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description. Although the ancient Arabs acquired in a somewhat high degree the science of dialectics,[1] their descendants are singularly deficient in the logical faculty. They are often incapable of drawing the most obvious conclusions from any simple premises of which they may admit the truth. Endeavour to elicit a plain statement of facts from an ordinary Egyptian. His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity. He will probably contradict himself half-a-dozen times before he has finished his story. He will often break down under the mildest process of cross-examination. The Egyptian is also eminently unsceptical. He readily becomes the dupe of the magician and the astrologer. Even highly educated Egyptians are prone to refer the common occurrences of life to the intervention of some supernatural agency. In political matters, as well as in the affairs of everyday life, the Egyptian will, without inquiry, accept as true the most absurd rumours.[1] He will, indeed, do more than this. He will often accept or reject such rumours in the inverse ratio of their probability, for, true to his natural inconsistency and want of rational discrimination, he will occasionally develop a flash of hardy scepticism when he is asked to believe the truth.

---

[1] "Pour nous, races profondément sérieuses, la conviction signifie la sincérité avec soi-même. Mais la sincérité avec soi-même n'a pas beaucoup de sens chez les peuples Orientaux, peu habitués aux délicatesses de l'esprit critique. Bonne foi et imposture sont des mots qui, dans notre conscience rigide, s'opposent comme deux termes inconciliables. En Orient, il y a de l'un à l'autre mille fuites et mille détours. . . . La vérité matérielle a très peu de prix pour l'Oriental; il voit tout à travers ses préjugés, ses intérêts, ses passions."—Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 263.

---

[1] It is well known that the Arabs of the eleventh and twelfth centuries exercised a considerable influence on European thought by their teaching of the Aristotelian philosophy. See, *inter alia*, Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. ciii. Also Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 68. Dante (*Inf.* c. iv. 143) speaks of Avicenna and of "Avverroès, che 'l gran commento feo."

Renan (*Averroès et l'Averroisme*, pp. ii. and iii.) makes the following remarks:—"Les Arabes ne firent qu'adopter l'ensemble de l'encyclopédie grecque telle que le monde entier l'avait acceptée vers le VIIème et le VIIIème siècle. . . . La philosophie Arabe offre l'exemple à peu près unique d'une très haute culture supprimée presque instantanément sans laisser de traces, et à peu près oubliée du peuple qui l'a créée. L'Islamisme dévoila en cette circonstance ce qu'il y a d'irrémédiablement étroit dans son génie. Le Christianisme, lui aussi, a été peu favorable au développement de la science positive; il a réussi à l'arrêter en Espagne et à l'entraver beaucoup en Italie, mais il ne l'a pas étouffée, et même les branches les plus élevées de la famille chrétienne ont fini par se réconcilier avec elle. Incapable de se transformer et d'admettre aucun élément de vie civile et profane, l'Islamisme arracha de son sein tout genre de culture rationelle. Cette tendance fatale fut combattue tandis que l'hégémonie de l'Islamisme resta entre les mains des Arabes, race si fine et si spirituelle, ou des Persans, race très portée à la spéculation; mais elle régna sans contrepoids depuis que des barbares (Turcs, Berbers, etc.) prirent la direction de l'Islam. Le monde Musulman entra dès lors dans cette période d'ignorante brutalité, d'où il n'est sorti que pour tomber dans la morne agonie où il se débât sous nos yeux."

Averroès is, of course, a Spanish corruption of Ibn-Rushd.

Contrast again the talkative European, bursting with superfluous energy, active in mind, inquisitive about everything he sees and hears, chafing under delay, and impatient of suffering, with the grave and silent Eastern, devoid of energy and initiative, stagnant in mind, wanting in curiosity about matters which are new to him, careless of waste of time and patient under suffering.

Or, again, look at the fulsome flattery, which the Oriental will offer to his superior and expect to receive from his inferior, and compare the general approval of such practices with the European frame of mind, which spurns both the flatterer and the person who invites flattery. This contemptible flattery, "the nurse of crime," as it was called by the poet Gay, is, indeed, a thorn in the side of the Englishman in Egypt, for it prevents Khedives and Pashas from hearing the truth from their own countrymen.[2]

---

[1] "The note of the primitive mind is amazing inaccuracy, coupled with wonderful receptivity."—Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, Second Series, p. 193.

[2] The extent to which servile flattery may be carried at an Oriental court is well illustrated by the account given by Creasy (*Ottoman Turks*, p. 261) of the relations between Sultan Ibrahim (A.D. 1640-48) and his Grand Viziers. His first Vizier was Kara-Mustapha, an honest and courageous man, who dared to tell the truth to his Sovereign. After a short career, he was dismissed from office and strangled. His successor, Sultanzade Pasha, determined not to err on the side of frankness. Even Ibrahim, who was one of the worst of the degenerate Sultans, could not help noticing his servility. "How is it," he said, "that thou art able always to approve of my actions, whether good or evil?" "My Padishah!" replied the Minister, "thou art Khalif; thou art God's shadow upon earth Every idea which thy spirit entertains is a revelation from Heaven. Thy orders, even when they appear

Perhaps there is no point as to which the difference between Eastern and Western habits of thought comes out into stronger relief than in the views which are respectively entertained by the Oriental and the European as regards provision for the future in this world. The European, especially if he be a Frenchman, is usually economical, and his economy will not unfrequently degenerate into meanness. He will pause before he gives pledges which, whilst providing for his immediate wants, may embarrass him or even reduce him to penury at no distant date. He will usually make provision for his old age, for the wife, who may, and for the children, who probably will survive him. The Egyptian generally cares for none of these things. He takes little heed for the morrow which will dawn on himself, and none for the days which are in store for those whom he will leave behind him. He is, perhaps, unconsciously influenced by the frame of mind engendered in himself and his progenitors from having lived for centuries under a succession of Governments, which afforded no security to the rights of property.[1] Whether he occupies the palace or the mud hut, he will often pledge his future with scarcely a thought of how his pledges may be redeemed. His life is in the past and in the present. The morrow must take care of the things of itself.

---

unreasonable, have an innate reasonableness, which thy slave ever reveres, though he may not always understand."

Ibrahim, Creasy adds, "accepted these assurances of infallibility and impeccability; and thenceforth spoke of himself as divinely inspired, in the midst of the most disgraceful scenes of folly, vice, and crime." He was eventually deposed and murdered.

[1] Indications are not wanting that, under the influence of good government, the improvident habits of the Egyptian population are being sensibly modified. I have alluded to this subject several times in successive Annual Reports in connection with the scheme which has been introduced with a view to lending small sums to the fellaheen. and thus liberating them from the grip of the village usurers.

But these same habits of improvidence tend perhaps to develop a quality which is worthy of praise. The Oriental may often be blamed for prodigality, but he rarely incurs the charge of meanness. He is charitable to his neighbours, and the fact may be recorded to his advantage without stopping to inquire whether his charity is due to kindliness of heart, or to the self-interest, which impels him, at the dictates of his religion, to lay up riches in the world to come. Moreover, the Oriental is proverbially hospitable. Indeed, his hospitality often errs on the side of being too lavish.

It may be added, whilst on the subject of kindliness of heart, that the cruelty to animals, which so often shocks visitors to Egypt, is no worse than that which may be witnessed amongst Christian nations in the south of Europe, and is probably, as Lane observed in 1835, not a plant of indigenous growth, but is rather due to association with low-class Europeans. The Moslem religion enjoins kindness to animals. "There is no religion which has taken a higher view in its authoritative documents of animal life. 'There is no beast on earth,' says the Koran, 'nor bird which flieth with wings, but the same is a people like unto you,—unto the Lord shall they return.'"[1]

Passing on to the consideration of another difference between the Oriental and the European, which will prove a perpetual stumbling-block to the Englishman in Egypt, it is to be observed that the ways of the Oriental are tortuous; his love of intrigue is inveterate; centuries of despotic government, during which his race has been exposed to the unbridled violence of capricious and headstrong Governors, have led him to fall back on the natural defence of the weak against the strong. He reposes unlimited faith in his own cunning, and to some extent his chosen weapon will stand him in good stead. But its employment will widen the breach between him and his protectors, for fate has willed that the Egyptians should be more especially associated with those members of the European family who, perhaps more than any others, loathe and despise intrigue; who, in their dealings with their fellow-men, are frank and blunt, even at times to brutality; and who, though not difficult to beguile, are apt unexpectedly to turn round and smite those who have beguiled them so hardly as to crush them to the dust. From this point of view, one of the more subtle Latin races, had it occupied the predominant position held by the English in Egypt, would probably have had more sympathy with the weaknesses of Egyptian character than the Anglo-Saxon.

---

[1] Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 255.

Look, again, to the high powers of organisation displayed by the European, to his constant endeavours to bend circumstances to suit his will, and to his tendency to question the acts of his superiors unless he happens to agree with them, a tendency which is especially marked in Englishmen, and which is only kept in subjection by the trained and intelligent discipline resulting from education. Compare these attributes with the feeble organising powers of the Oriental, with his fatalism which accepts the inevitable, and with his submissiveness to all constituted authority.

And if it be held that powers of organisation are only required amongst the educated classes, look to what, for want of a more appropriate term to express the idea, may be called the general muddle-headedness of the ordinary uneducated Egyptian, of which a few instances may be given.

On more than one occasion, a pointsman in the Egyptian railway service has been known to turn his points when the passing train had been *half* transferred from one line to the other, with the natural result that the train was upset. An Egyptian engine-driver has been known to forget which handle to turn in order to stop his locomotive. On several occasions, railway employés have been killed owing to their having gone to sleep with their heads on the rail, that special position having been adopted in order to ensure their being awakened by the noise of an approaching train. A European would think that, where a road and a paved side-walk existed, it required no great effort of the reasoning faculty to perceive that human beings were intended to pass along the side-walk, and animals along the road. The point is not always so clear to the Egyptian. He will not unfrequently walk in the middle of the road, and will send his donkey along the side-path. Instances of this sort might be multiplied. Compare the habits of thought which can lead to actions of this nature with the promptitude with which the European seizes on an idea when it is presented to him, and acts as occasion may demand.

Then, again, side by side with the European's appreciation of arithmetic, consider that in all matters connected with number or quantity, the ordinary Egyptian goes hopelessly astray. Few uneducated Egyptians know their own age. The usual reply of an Egyptian, if asked the age of some old man, is that he is a hundred years old. What importance, he thinks, can be attached to precision about a matter of this sort, or, indeed, to any scientific or quasi-scientific subject? I once asked a former head of the El-Azhar University whether his professors taught that the sun went round the earth or the earth round the sun. He replied that he was not sure, that one nation thought one way, and another another way,—his natural politeness possibly forbidding him to express to me what he really thought of the infidels Kepler and Copernicus and their doctrines,—that his general impression was that the sun went round the earth, but that he had never paid much attention to the matter, and that the subject was too unimportant to merit serious discussion. Tell an Egyptian cook that he puts too much salt into the soup. He will abstain altogether from the use of salt. Or, on the other hand, tell him that he does not use salt enough; he will throw in a bucketful. He cannot hit the happy mean; moderation in the use of salt, or in anything else, is foreign to his nature; he cannot grasp the idea of quantity. Again, ask an Arab from the Soudan how many men were killed at one of the numerous battles which have taken place in that country. The only thing which is certain is that he will not state the precise truth, or anything near it, except by accident. Neither will he reply that he cannot answer the question addressed to him. He will, without hesitation, blurt out the first conjecture, which flashes across his brain, as a fact coming within his personal knowledge. He may say 100, or he may say 2000. He has a very faint conception of what either figure represents, and he will be prepared to bring the original 100 up to 2000, or the original 2000 down to 100, according to the views which, by the light of subsequent conversation, would appear gratifying to his interrogator.

Again, consider the manners of the Oriental as contrasted with those of the European. We hear a great deal in praise of Oriental courtesy, and the praise is in some respects well deserved. A high-class European will be charmed with the manners of a high-class Oriental, albeit he is aware that the exaggerated compliments common in the East are merely figurative, and cannot be taken to represent the real sentiments of the speaker. But look a little deeper and examine the ground on which these outward forms of courtesy are based. The examination will bring out a somewhat unpleasant feature of the Egyptian character. For one of the main reasons why an Egyptian, if he is in any position of authority, is courteous is that he thinks it his interest to be so. In spite of this outside courtesy to his superiors, he will not unfrequently be harsh and tyrannical to his inferiors, to whose feelings and interests he is often indifferent. There are, however, exceptions. Slaves are more often treated with kindness than severity, although in this case motives of self-interest may perhaps be traced. Amongst the middle and lower classes of Egyptians a spirit of real courtesy, not based on self-interest, is often to be found in their hospitality towards strangers. Moreover, among equals of all classes, the outward forms of courtesy are preserved.

These points have been indicated at some length because the differences between Eastern and Western habits of thought constitute a barrier interposed between the Egyptian and the Englishman almost as great as that resulting from differences of religion, ideas of government, and social customs. Indeed, this difference of mental attributes constitutes perhaps the greatest of all barriers. It prevents the Englishman and the Egyptian from understanding each other. Nevertheless, there is one saving clause, which serves in some respects as a bond of union between the two races. Once explain to an Egyptian what he is to do, and he will assimilate the idea rapidly. He is a good imitator, and will make a faithful, even sometimes a too servile copy of the work of his European teacher. His civilisation may be a veneer, yet he will readily adopt the letter, the catchwords and jargon, if not the spirit of

European administrative systems. His movements will, it is true, be not unfrequently those of an automaton, but a skilfully constructed automaton may do a great deal of useful work. This feature in the Egyptian character is of great importance in connection with the administration of the country. It is a source of strength, and also a source of weakness; for, so long as British supervision is maintained, the Egyptian will readily copy the practices and procedures of his English teachers. No necessity will, therefore, arise for employing any large number of English subordinates. On the other hand, inasmuch as the Egyptian has but little power of initiation, and often does not thoroughly grasp the reasons why his teachers have impelled him in certain directions, a relapse will ensue if English supervision be withdrawn.

Look now to the consequences which result from the degradation of women in Mohammedan countries. In respect to two points, both of which are of vital importance, there is a radical difference between the position of Moslem women and that of their European sisters. In the first place, the face of the Moslem woman is veiled when she appears in public. She lives a life of seclusion. The face of the European woman is exposed to view in public. The only restraints placed on her movements are those dictated by her own sense of propriety. In the second place, the East is polygamous, the West is monogamous.

It cannot be doubted that the seclusion of women exercises a baneful effect on Eastern society. The arguments on this subject are, indeed, so commonplace that it is unnecessary to dwell on them. It will be sufficient to say that seclusion, by confining the sphere of woman's interest to a very limited horizon, cramps the intellect and withers the mental development of one-half of the population in Moslem countries. "An Englishwoman asked an Egyptian lady how she passed her time. 'I sit on this sofa,' she answered, 'and when I am tired, I cross over and sit on that.'"[1] Moreover, inasmuch as women, in their capacities as wives and mothers, exercise a great influence over the characters of their husbands and sons, it is obvious that the seclusion of women must produce a deteriorating effect on the male population, in whose presumed interests the custom was originally established, and is still maintained.

When an Egyptian woman interferes in politics, her interference is almost always mischievous. The information she obtains is necessarily communicated to her through a variety of distorted media. The fact of her seclusion renders it well-nigh impossible for her to hear both sides of a question. The most trumpery gossip will be sufficient to set her suspicions ablaze, and to convince her that some danger, which is often imaginary, hangs over the head of herself or her relatives. Ignorance of any world beyond that of the harem renders it impossible for her to discriminate between truth and falsehood, between what is within the bounds of possibility and what is so manifestly absurd as to be impossible.

I need not dwell on the causes which, in Egypt, as in other Oriental countries, have led to the seclusion of women, nor on the extent to which this practice is due to the prevalence of the Mohammedan religion.[2] From the point of view of the politician and administrator, the consideration of these questions, interesting though they be, is of little more than academic interest. I am not endeavouring in this work to discuss the effects of Islamism upon progress and civilisation in general. My task is of a more humble nature. I am merely attempting to describe the state of things which the English found in existence when they took in hand the rehabilitation of Egypt. Amongst other social difficulties it has, therefore, to be noted that Moslem women in Egypt are secluded, and that their influence, partly by reason of their seclusion, is, in all political and administrative matters, generally bad.

---

[1] *Cairo,* p. 140.

[2] "The system of the harem is, in its origin, not Moslem, but simply Oriental. The only reproach that can be made against the Prophet is that, by too definite legislation, he rendered subsequent development and reform impossible."—*Turkey in Europe,* p. 190.

The effects of polygamy are more baneful and far-reaching than those of seclusion. The whole fabric of European society rests upon the preservation of family life. Monogamy fosters family life, polygamy destroys it. The monogamous Christian respects women; the teaching of his religion and the incidents of his religious worship tend to elevate them. He sees in the Virgin Mary an ideal of womanhood, which would be incomprehensible in a Moslem country.[1] The Moslem, on the other hand, despises women; both his religion and the example of his Prophet, the history of whose private life has been handed down to him, tend to lower them in his eyes. Save in exceptional cases, the Christian fulfils the vow which he has made at the altar to cleave to his wedded wife for life. The Moslem, when his passion is sated, can if he likes throw off his wife like an old glove. According to the Sunnis, whose doctrines are quoted because the Egyptians are Sunnis, "A husband may divorce his wife without any misbehaviour on her part, or without assigning any cause. The divorce of every husband is effective if he be of sound understanding and of mature age."[1] There is, however, a good deal of difference of opinion amongst legal authorities as to the law of divorce.[2] The general principle inculcated by Mohammed on this subject is thus explained in the *Traditions*: "The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce."[3] The practice of monogamy has of late years been gaining ground amongst the more enlightened Egyptians. The late and the present Khedive, the late Chérif Pasha, and Riaz Pasha may be cited as monogamous notabilities. The movement in this direction may be attributed to several causes. In the first place, education and association with Europeans may have induced the conviction that it is more respectable, and generally more conducive to domestic happiness, to marry one wife rather than to take advantage of the permission granted by Mohammed to "marry what seems good to you of women, by twos, or threes, or fours, or what your right hand possesses" (*Surah*, iv. 3). In the second place, polygamy is expensive. Lane said, so long ago as 1835, "I believe that not more than one husband among twenty has two wives,"[4] and since Lane's time, the practice of polygamy has certainly diminished. Nevertheless, the movement in favour of monogamy cannot be as yet called general. The first thing an Egyptian of the lower classes will do when he gets a little money is to marry a second wife. A groom in my stables was divorced and re-married eleven times in the course of a year or two. I remember hearing of an old Pasha who complained peevishly that he had to go to the funeral of his first wife, to whom he had been married forty years previously, and whose very existence he had forgotten. The great facility given to divorce necessarily weakens the strength of the family tie. Further, in the West, a wife, whose personal attractions have disappeared under the hand of time, can often, in default of other influences, maintain her hold over her husband's affections through the children which she has borne to him.

---

[1] See Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. p. 367. No Moslem could appreciate the beauty of Wordsworth's sonnet on the Virgin :—

> Thy image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
> Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend
> As to a visible Power, in which did blend
> All that was mixed and reconciled in thee,
> Of Mother's love with maiden purity,
> Of high with low, celestial with terrene.

---

[1] *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 88.

[2] This question is fully discussed by Syed Ameer Ali in his *Personal Law of the Mohammedans*, chapters xi.-xiii.

[3] *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 87.

[4] *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 231.

> Femina quum senuit, retinet connubia partu,
> Uxorisque decus matris reverentia pensat.

The hold which the discarded or neglected Moslem wife might maintain on grounds such as these is weakened by the presence of younger and more attractive rivals, who have perhaps borne other children to her husband.

Amongst other consequences resulting from polygamy and the customs which cluster round polygamy, it may be noted that, whereas in the West the elevation of women has tended towards the refinement both of literature and of conversation, in the East their degradation has encouraged literary and conversational coarseness. This coarseness has attracted the attention of all who have written on Egyptian manners and customs.[1] It is true that the Moslem may fairly argue that he started 600 years later than the Christian in the race to attain civilisation, and that, apart from the English dramatists of the seventeenth century, the writings of Boccaccio and of Rabelais denote a state of society no more refined than that which at present exists in Egypt; and he may use this argument with all the greater reason inasmuch as the class of humour which finds most favour in Egyptian society is very much akin to that which we may now read in the *Decameron.* But, in the first place, it is to be observed that the *Decameron* is a model of refinement as compared with many works in Arabic; and, in the second place, it may be doubted whether, even in the Middle Ages, the general coarseness of European society was ever on a par with that of the modern Egyptians.

---

[1] Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. pp. 260 and 273.

There is, however, one feature in connection with family life in the East, where the Oriental contrasts very favourably with the European. "Paradise," the Prophet finely said, "lies under the feet of mothers." Greater outward respect is, in fact, shown to parents, and to old age in general, by Eastern than by Western races. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man and fear thy God." Egyptians have from time immemorial acted on this Levitical principle. Herodotus says: "Their (the Egyptian) young men when they meet their elders in the streets, give way to them and step aside; and if an elder man comes in where young men are present, these latter rise from their seats."[1] Young Egyptians generally respect and obey their parents and are well treated by them, unless, indeed, both parents and children occupy very high positions, in which case, the principle laid down by the Prophet Micah rather than that prescribed by Moses forms the basis of the family connection: "A man's enemies are the men of his own house."

Consider also the different standpoints from which the European and the Oriental approach the subject of government.

---

[1] Book ii. chapter 132.

The point of view of the Eastern is wholly different from that of the Western. I speak, of course, of the true Eastern, free from European alloy; for when once the Eastern, and notably the Egyptian, has been semi-Europeanised, he will often develop with amazing rapidity into a root-and-branch reformer. He will not understand moderation in reform any more than the Egyptian cook, who was recently mentioned, will understand moderation in the use of salt. The true Eastern is a staunch conservative. He would probably look upon an Oriental Lord Eldon as a rash innovator. European affairs appear to him to be in a constant state of flux; his frame of mind is fitly represented by Matthew Arnold's fine lines:—

> The East bowed low before the blast
> In patient deep disdain;
> She let the legions thunder past,
> And plunged in thought again.

The mind of the true Eastern is at once lethargic and suspicious; he does not want to be reformed, and he is convinced that, if the European wishes to reform him, the desire springs from sentiments which bode him no good. Moreover, his conservatism is due to an instinct of self-preservation, and to a dim perception that, if he allows himself to be even slightly reformed, all the things to which he attaches importance will be not merely changed in this or that particular, but will rather be swept off the face of the earth. Perhaps he is not far wrong. Although there are many highly-educated gentlemen who profess the Moslem religion, it has yet to be proved that Islam can assimilate civilisation without succumbing in the process. It is, indeed, not improbable that, in its passage through the European crucible, many of the distinctive features of Islam, the good alike with the bad, will be volatilised, and that it will eventually issue forth in a form scarcely capable of recognition. "The Egyptians," Moses said, "whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."[1] The prophecy may be approaching fulfilment in a sense different to that in which it was addressed to the Israelites.

Look, moreover, not only to the spirit of the lawgivers, but to the general principles on which the laws are based. The tendency in all civilised European States is to separate religious from civil laws. In Moslem States, on the other hand, religious and civil laws are inextricably interwoven. In the West, the law recognises and encourages the use of credit,[2] and protects the creditor. It may be remarked incidentally that, in respect to this point perhaps more than any other, the ignorant and improvident Egyptian suffered when the Code Napoléon, like a Juggernaut's car, passed over his back. On the other hand, the Moslem law condemns usury, and thus discourages the outlay of capital.[3] The lax Egyptian Moslem is obliged to have recourse to all sorts of subterfuges in order to lend money without violating the letter of the law. The presence of the Christian usurer, with whom it is at times possible for the Moslem to form an unnatural alliance based on a community of interest, facilitates subterfuges of this sort.

Again, in the East the theory and practice that the Government is the sole proprietor of the soil survives to a certain extent. In the West, on the other hand, the theory has been well-nigh forgotten, and the practice no longer survives. Save in the least civilised portions of Europe,[1] land is held to be the private property of individuals.

---

[1] Exodus xiv. 13.

[2] It should, however, be remembered that, during the Middle Ages, the Christian Church exerted its influence against usury, with the result that the money-lending business fell into the hands of the Jews.

[3] The Moslem depositors in the Government Savings Banks often decline to accept interest on their deposits.

So also as regards criminal laws, the differences are striking. The Moslem code is based upon the principle, long since abandoned in the West, that it is the business of the State to oblige its citizens to be religious and moral. A sentence of death for blasphemy could not, of course, at present be carried out, but a case occurred in Egypt, since the British occupation, of a man who received eighty blows with a courbash, under sentence from the Kadi, for smoking a cigarette in the streets during the Ramazan fast. In general also, Oriental punishments are cruel,[2] whilst European punishments are mild. This fact tends towards brutalising the population and rendering them cruel to each other.

Compare, again, the languages, art, architecture, and music of the Oriental with those of the European. It will be found that on almost every point the practices and the tastes of the one are opposed to those of the other.

Oriental alphabets are intricate. The Turk, the Arab, and the Persian begin to write on the right side of the page; the short vowels are almost always omitted. European alphabets, on the other hand, are simple. The European begins to write on the left-hand side of the page.

Orientals continue to copy from one style of art. European art is various and constantly develops new forms.

Oriental music, which is much the same in all parts of the East, is wanting in harmony and monotonous to the ears of most Europeans.[1] European music, on the other hand, generally fails to please Orientals.

---

[1] See Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's *Russia*.

[2] Moltke, who wrote in 1836, says (*Briefe, etc., in der Türkei*, p. 36) that he had been a personal witness of the barbarous punishment inflicted in Turkey on unfaithful wives.

Turn, again, to the most ordinary customs and expressions, the dress, etc., of the Oriental as compared with the European. It will be found that, even in the most trivial matters, the Oriental will generally do or say the opposite to what the European would do or say under similar circumstances. Numerous instances in point will readily occur to any one who has even a slight acquaintance with Eastern social life.

The ethnologist, the comparative philologist, and the sociologist would possibly be able to give explanations as regards many of the differences which exist between the East and the West. As I am only a diplomatist and an administrator, whose proper study is also man, but from the point of view of governing him rather than from that of scientific research into how he comes to be what he is, I content myself with noting the fact that somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European. "Tout, chez ce peuple, porte l'empreinte d'un contraste frappant avec les habitudes des nations Européennes. Cette différence est l'ouvrage du climat, des institutions civiles et des préjugés religieux."[2]

Many of the observations contained in this chapter may be considered commonplace. Nothing, indeed, has been stated which will be new to those who have paid attention to Eastern affairs, or who are in any degree familiar with the social life of the East. I have, however, thought it desirable to make a catalogue—and, I may add, a very incomplete catalogue—of the main points as to which Egyptian and European habits of thought and customs diverge, for, although each detail taken by itself may be well known, it may be doubted whether even those Englishmen who have been actively engaged in the work of Egyptian administration have always recognised to the full that, in taking in hand Egyptian reform, they had to deal with a society which was not only in a backward state of civilisation, but which was also, from their point of view, well-nigh incomprehensible. They were brought face to face with a population which, in the eyes of the European, was, morally and politically speaking, walking on its head. Lord Dalling, at one time Ambassador at Constantinople, is credited with saying: "When you wish to know what a Turkish official is likely to do, first consider what it would be his interest to do; next, what any other man would do in similar circumstances; and thirdly, what every one expects him to do. When you have ascertained these, you are so far advanced on your road that you may be perfectly certain he will not adopt any of these courses." Often have I thought that an Egyptian would take a certain view of a question based on my idea of the manner in which he would interpret either his own or Egyptian interests. And often have I found that he interpreted those interests in some strange and fanciful manner, which would never have entered into the head of any European.

---

[1] There can be no doubt that from the earliest times the Arabs have taken extreme delight in their own music. See Kremer's *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, vol. i. p. 149.

[2] *Description de l'Égypte*, p. 83.

All these considerations, however, affected the Englishman but slightly when, in 1882, he undertook the regeneration of Egypt. When it is remembered that, in addition to the difficulties arising from the causes to which allusion is made in this chapter, the country had, for at least a century previous to 1882, been governed under a system which exhibited the extremes of savage cruelty and barbarity;[1] that the impulse towards civilisation first imparted, and not unintelligently imparted by the rough men of genius who founded the Khedivial dynasty, was continued on principles, which may almost be characterised as insane, by the incapable Said, and the spendthrift Ismail; that under their auspices all that was least creditable to European civilisation was attracted to Egypt, on whose carcase swarms of needy adventurers preyed at will; that, as a consequence of these proceedings, the very name of European stank in the nostrils of the Egyptian population; that whatever European ideas had taken root in the country had been imported from France; that the French Government and French public opinion were at the outset bitterly opposed to the action of England in Egypt; that, through the medium of an unscrupulous press, Englishmen were vilified and their actions systematically misrepresented; that, under the pressure of Europe and the European creditors of Egypt, a variety of complicated institutions had been created which were in advance of the requirements and state of civilisation of the country; that the Treasury was well-nigh bankrupt; that the army had been disbanded; that no law-courts worthy of the name existed;

---

[1] Bruce, writing of his visit to Cairo in 1768, says: "The Government of Cairo is much praised by some. It may perhaps have merit when explained, but I never could understand it, and therefore cannot explain it. But a more brutal, unjust, tyrannical, oppressive, avaricious set of infernal miscreants there is not on earth than are the members of the Government of Cairo" (*Travels to discover the Source of the Nile*, vol. i. p. 26). Volney, who visited Egypt in 1783-5, wrote: "Tout ce que l'on voit, ou que l'on entend, annonce que l'on est dans le pays de l'esclavage et de la tyrannie. On ne parle que de troubles civils, que de misère publique, que d'extorsions d'argent, que de bastonnades et de meurtres. Nulle sûreté pour la vie ou la propriété. On verse le sang d'un homme comme celui d'un bœuf. La justice même le verse sans formalité. L'officier de nuit dans ses rondes, l'officier de jour dans ses tournées, jugent, condamnent et font exécuter en un clin d'œil et sans appel. Des bourreaux les accompagnent, et au premier ordre la tête d'un malheureux tombe dans le sac de cuir, où on la reçoit de peur de souiller la place."—*Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte*, p. 162.

that the Englishman's own countrymen, who, according to their custom, judged mainly by results, expected that at the touch of his administrative wand all abuses would forthwith disappear; that the fellah expected immediate relief from taxation and oppression; that the Levantine contractor expected to dip his itching palm into the till of the British Treasury; that the Englishman's position was undefined, and that he was unable to satisfy all these expectations at once; that, having just quelled a rebellion in Egypt, he was confronted with a still more formidable rebellion in the Soudan; and, lastly, that before he had seriously begun the work of reform, he was constantly pressed by Frenchmen, and by some of his own countrymen, to declare his conviction that the work was accomplished,—when all these points are remembered, the difficulty of the task which England undertook may be appreciated in its true light. But the task was ennobled by its difficulty. It was one worthy of the past history, the might, the resources, and the sterling national qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race. I shall presently endeavour to show how it was accomplished. Before, however, dealing with this portion of my task, the component parts of the population of Egypt require some further analysis.

# CHAPTER XXXV

## THE MOSLEMS

Classification of the population—The Turco-Egyptians—The Egyptians—The hierarchy—The Grand Mufti—The head of the El-Azhar University—The Grand Kadi—The Sheikh el-Bekri—Mohammed el-Saadat — Abdul-Khalik el-Saadat — Mohammed Abdu — Mohammed Beyram—The Omdehs and Sheikhs — Their submissiveness to the Pashas—Their sympathy with Arábi—Their tyranny over the Fellaheen—Their feelings towards England—The Fellaheen—The Bedouins.

According to the census of 1897, the dwellers in Egypt were at that time 9,734,000 in number. These 9,734,000 souls may be classified in various ways.

In the first place, they may be considered as, on the one side, Ottoman subjects, a category which would include almost every species of semi-Egyptian hybrid, and on the other side, Europeans, a category which would include every nondescript who could, by hook or by crook, get his name registered at some European Consulate. Or, they may be classified as officials and non-officials, a classification, the discussion of which would bring into relief the fact that, when the British occupation commenced, it had not yet been realised by the native officials of Egypt that they were the trustees of the non-official classes; rather were the latter considered to be the legitimate prey of the former. Or, they may be classified as Moslems and Christians, a distinction which, being converted from terms of religious belief into those of political and social life, would differentiate the ignorant, conservative mass from the more subtle, more superficially intellectual, but, if the true Europeans be excluded, by no means more virile minority. In the following remarks, the last of these three classifications will be adopted.

The Moslems consist, first, of Turks and Turco-Egyptians; secondly, of Egyptians; and thirdly, of Bedouins. A few Moslems resident in Egypt will thus remain unclassified; for instance, there are a few Algerians and Tunisians, who are French, and a few natives of India, who are British subjects. There are also a considerable number of Soudanese, an element which was found of importance when the reorganisation of the Egyptian army was taken in hand. But, for the purposes of the present argument, it will suffice to deal with the Moslems under the three main heads given above.

The Turk was the conqueror of Egypt, and within the memory of persons still living behaved as such. But there are now but few pure Turks left. In the absence of fresh importations from Turkey, a process of Egyptianisation set in. Absence from the headquarters of Ottoman thought and action, and intermarriage with Egyptians, produced their natural results. It is thought that no such thing as a pure Turk of the third generation is to be found within the length and breadth of the land. It is, indeed, a misnomer to speak of Turks in Egypt. By the time the English occupied the country in 1882, all the Turks had blossomed or, as some would say, degenerated into Turco-Egyptians. This is a point which the English politician had to bear carefully in mind, for as each year of the British occupation passed by, the Turco-Egyptian element in Egyptian society became more Egyptian and less Turkish in character and habits of thought. In common with other Moslems, the Turco-Egyptians looked to the Sultan as their Pope. But, on the other hand, they were year by year less inclined to regard him as their King. When, in 1892, the British Government stepped in and prevented a Firman of the Sultan from being promulgated, they rallied in a half-hearted and platonic manner round the Commander of the Faithful. They winced at the spectacle of his humiliation at the hands of a Christian Power. But, even then, the feelings of indignation excited in their breasts were probably no stronger than those which would be felt by an Italian patriot, who was also a devout Catholic, and who saw the Vatican obliged to yield to the Quirinal.

Again, in 1906, when the relations between England and Turkey were strained by the occurrence of what is known as the "Sinai Peninsula" incident, a strong wave of pro-Turkish feeling seemed to sweep over Egypt, but it was a purely fictitious movement, manufactured by the Anglophobe press. It speedily died a natural death.

In truth, religious conviction, backed by racial prejudices and by the sympathy generally entertained amongst Orientals for a theocratic form of government, may for a while wrestle with personal interest and political associations, but the chances are that, if the struggle is continued, religious conviction will get a fall. Pro-Turkish sentiment will, therefore, smoulder and occasionally flicker up sufficiently to show some feeble light, but it will never burst into a blaze. For, in fact, many considerations are constantly dragging the Turco-Egyptian in a direction away from Constantinople. Although he may try to deceive others, he cannot deceive himself. He knows well enough what he would do if he got the upper hand; he would plunder every one he could indiscriminately. He knows that his own brethren, whom his ancestors left behind at Constantinople, are prepared to act on precisely similar principles, and he feels that if they, who are certainly the most powerful of the sons of Islam, were once to step on the scene, his affinity of race would avail him little; he would take rank with the plundered rather than with the plunderers; or, at best, he would have to stand by and see the Egyptians robbed without obtaining any adequate share of the plunder. Rather than submit to this fate, it were perhaps better to take the good things the Englishmen offer to him; it is true that they will not let him spoil the Egyptian, but they will prevent the Constantinopolitan Turk from spoiling him; they give him wealth and security for his life and property; perhaps it will be as well to pause before throwing away these benefits in order to obtain the doubtful advantages of being governed by a number of co-religionists, whose community of religion will in no degree temper their rapacity. Then, again, as time went on, a few Turco-Egyptians were animated by sentiments which, however unpractical, were by no means ignoble. They became identified with Egyptian aspirations, and wished to establish a government free from the interference of either Turk or European. A few also recognised the benefits conferred on the country by the British occupation, and loyally co-operated with the British officials in furthering the cause of reform.

Thus, in 1882, the English found a body of Turco-Egyptians who occupied the principal places under Government; who were the chief landowners in the country; who disliked the English, inasmuch as they knew by intuition that their intervention would save the Egyptians from being plundered; who occasionally cast a glance towards Constantinople, and were willing enough to try and scare the Englishman with the bugbear of the Khalif's spiritual authority; who would have been bitterly disappointed if their political flirtations with the Porte had been taken seriously, and if the Mohammedan Pope, doffing his mitre, had assumed the crown, handled the sword, and commenced to assert his authority in temporal affairs; and who, lastly, in the presence of the alien and the Christian, showed a tendency to amalgamate with the other dwellers on Egyptian soil in the creation of a sort of spurious patriotism. I say spurious patriotism, because the alliance between the semi-Egyptianised Turk and the pure Egyptian is unnatural. The people of Egypt are not really with the representative Turco-Egyptians. The peculiar characteristic of the typical Turco-Egyptian is his catholic capacity for impotent hatred. He hates the Englishman, because the Englishman curbs him. He hates and fears the pure Turk, because the pure Turk is difficult to curb. He despises the Egyptian, whom he regards as his prey, and who, in fact, would be his prey were it not for the English watchdog who keeps him off.

Amongst the many vague ideals incapable of realisation which are floating about in the Egyptian political atmosphere, nothing is more certain than that the ideal of the Turco-Egyptian can never be realised. He can never be restored to the position of trust, which he formerly occupied and abused.

But, with all this, the Turco-Egyptian has some redeeming qualities. The glamour of a dominant race still hovers as an aureole, albeit a very dimmed aureole, round his head. He is certainly not more corrupt than the Egyptian; he is more manly, and the greater the quantity of Turkish blood running in his veins, the more will his manly qualities appear. He is sometimes truthful and outspoken after his own fashion. He has a rude standard of honour. Go where you will in Egypt, if any bit of administrative work requiring a certain amount of energy has been well done by a native official, it will generally be found that the official in question is a Circassian or a Turco-Egyptian, who is probably more Turk than Egyptian. The Turco-Egyptian can, in fact, still to a certain extent command, and that is why, with all his defects, and in spite of the fact that the class to which he belongs is generally Anglophobe — although there are some notable exceptions,—it will often be found that the individual Englishman will get on well with the individual Turk, and better with the Turco-Egyptian than with the pure Egyptian, the Syrian or the Armenian. The northerner and the Oriental meet on the common ground that the Englishman is masterful, and that the Turco-Egyptian, though less masterful than the pure Turk, is more so than the pure Egyptian. The Englishman belongs to an imperial race, and the Turco-Egyptian to a race which but yesterday was imperial. The English, Nubar Pasha once said to me, "are the Turks of the West."

The second category of Egyptian Moslems may be divided into three heads. These are—first, the hierarchy; second, the squirearchy; and third, the fellaheen.

The Ulema—the learned men[1]—of the El-Azhar Mosque constitute a distinct religious corporation, which is divided into grades, and which is officially recognised by the Government. A University is attached to the Mosque. The number of Ulema is limited; in order to qualify for the rank of "Alim," which carries with it the right to wear a pelisse conferred by the Khedive, a candidate must have studied at the University, and have passed certain examinations to test his knowledge of the Koran, the Traditions (Hadith), and the Sacred Law of Islam. Many a Moslem may be learned in the ordinary acceptation of the term; he may, for instance be a "Hafiz," who can repeat the whole Koran by heart, or, at all events, is supposed to be able to do so; but unless he has undergone the necessary examination at the El-Azhar University, he is not, technically speaking, considered an "Alim." He may officiate at religious services, but he will not have acquired the right to expound either the tenets of Islam or the Sacred Law at any of the principal Mosques.

---

[1] "Ulema" is the plural of the Arabic word "Alim," signifying learned, a doctor of laws.

The three chief Ulema are the Grand Mufti, the head of the El-Azhar University, and the Grand Kadi. The last named takes what is the equivalent of his degree, not at Cairo, but at Constantinople.

The Grand Mufti is the chief law-doctor of the country. It is his duty to pronounce *ex cathedra* opinions (Fetwas) upon any doubtful points of the Sacred Law, which may be submitted to him. He is a magnate of whose spiritual authority the temporal rulers of the country must take account. Despotic Khedives and even, it is said, Suleiman the Magnificent,[1] have tried to force the hand or override the decisions of the Grand Mufti, and like their Christian prototype who tried to throw off

[1] It is related that Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent asked Sheikh Abu Saoud, who was one of the greatest of the Ottoman Muftis, to issue a Fetwa declaring it lawful to put to death all the inhabitants of conquered European provinces who refused to embrace the faith of Islam. The Grand Mufti would not comply with this request.

Abbas I. is said to have requested the Grand Mufti (Sheikh-el-Abbasi, who died in 1893 at the age of ninety) to issue a Fetwa stating that the power of ratifying a sentence of death lay not, as was then the practice, with the Sultan, but with the Viceroy. The Grand Mufti refused. He was exiled to the Soudan, but, in the face of the strong protests made by many of the leading Mohammedans of Cairo, even despotic Abbas was obliged to yield. The Mufti was recalled.

the spiritual yoke, they have generally been obliged to go to Canossa.[1] The English politician also has to recognise the Mufti's existence. When, indeed, the venerable old man, who at one time occupied the post of Grand Mufti, advocated, as the most natural thing in the world, the crucifixion of criminals,[2] it was scarcely necessary for the Englishman to raise his little finger in order to remind the Egyptian world that, although the onward tramp of civilisation might be heard but faintly within the sacred precincts of the Mosque, he was nevertheless standing outside its walls with his treaties, his newspapers, and if needs be, his soldiers, to assert the validity of anti-crucifixionist principles. But, though in an extreme case such as this the Englishman could impose a veto on some barbarous act, he could not do much more. He could not make the Egyptian horse drink of the waters of civilisation, albeit the most limpid streams of social and juridical reform were turned into the trough before him, if the Mufti condemned the act of drinking as impious. Popes and other ecclesiastical dignitaries have before now shown that they cannot be dragooned into submission. Neither do Muftis fear red-coated soldiers. Moreover, they fear the wrath of the European press even less than they fear redcoats.

The head of the famous El-Azhar University exercises a certain degree of control in temporal matters over those of the Ulema who lecture in the mosques, and must himself be, *par excellence*, an "Alim." The incumbent of this office during the first few years of my residence in Egypt was a worthy old man, with whom I entertained excellent personal relations, although, as has been already mentioned,[1] our views as to the movements of the planets were not identical.

---

[1] I say "generally" because there have been exceptions to the rule. Thus, in 1637, Amurath IV. put the Grand Mufti to death.—Creasy, *Ottoman Turks*, p. 253.

[2] *Vide ante*, p. 135

The Grand Kadi is perhaps the greatest of the Ulema. Up to the present time, he has always been a Turk from Constantinople. He pronounces final judgment on all subjects which come within the domain of personal law, having been bereft of criminal and civil jurisdiction by the progress which is constantly kibing the heel of his decadent system. I well remember the Grand Kadi who was in office when I first went to Cairo. His venerable face, long white beard, small hands, dignified mien, and graceful robes rendered him a striking figure. Such, I can fancy, were the Pharisees who were members of the Jewish Sanhedrim. His manners were perfect, perhaps more so than his judgments. His successor was a younger man with a fine intelligent face. He arrived at Cairo with excellent intentions; he was going to purify his court of false witnesses, and he was delighted when he found that I was able to talk to him in Turkish, albeit very bad Turkish, on the subject. I welcomed an ally, and awaited the result with interest. I had not long to wait. The Kadi soon came to the conclusion that the Egyptians were an uninteresting race. As they appeared to like the corrupt system to which they were accustomed, why should he kick against the pricks in trying to reform it?

These three are, from their official positions, the most important of the class, who, by reason of their acquaintance with theological lore and ancient custom, are termed "learned." It may, however, be interesting to sketch a few other types of their class.

The Sheikh el-Bekri is an "Alim," and a notable one of his class. The first incumbent of the office during my residence in Cairo was a small wizened man with a pock-marked countenance, who, when I paid him my Ramazan visit, used to peer at me through a pair of cunning little eyes, in which fear and hatred of his visitor seemed to be struggling for predominance. I always felt that, when I left his house, he cursed me, my race, and my religion, and I never entertained the least ill-will against him for doing so. When he died, his brother, a much younger man, succeeded him. It soon became apparent that a new Sheikh el-Bekri had arisen. When the spiritual head of a variety of Moslem sects boasted of his acquaintance with Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone; when he quoted Jean Jacques Rousseau to me on the Rights of Man in excellent French; when he indulged in platitudes on the blessings of parliamentary government; and when he asked me to lend him a few books which might enable him to understand the "philosophy of the French Revolution,"—then I asked myself whether I was in a dream. Was this *fin de siècle* Sheikh, this curious compound of Mecca and the Paris Boulevards, the latest development of Islamism? I should add that the combination produced no results of any importance. The new Sheikh soon sank into political insignificance.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 153.

I can best describe another "Alim" by relating an anecdote about him. Sheikh Mohammed el-Saadat, as his name signifies, was a Seyyid, a descendant of the Prophet.[1] He was, moreover, wealthy and influential. I happened to hear at one time that he was raving against the English. My experience had taught me that political opinions in Egypt are not unfrequently connected with some personal grievance. I called on the Sheikh, and asked him how he thought matters were going on.

---

[1] "Saadat" is the plural form of the Arabic word "Seyyid," which means a descendant of the Prophet, an aristocrat, lord, master.

Everything, he said, was very bad. I encouraged him to talk. Then he burst out into a long tirade about the desperate state of the country. Could he, I asked, point out any particular abuse, for it was difficult to deal with generalities? Certainly he could do so; he had no water for a portion of his property, whereas he always got water before the English came into the country. I inquired into the matter. As I had expected, I found that the Sheikh's statement was quite correct. He belonged to the privileged class. Under the old régime, he always got water, although his neighbours often went without it. Since the English engineers had taken the irrigation of the country in hand, they had recognised no privileges. All were treated alike. The Sheikh had to await his turn. Naturally enough, he did not like this levelling process. Fortunately, shortly after my interview with him, the Sheikh's turn came. He, of course, attributed this to the exercise of my influence on his behalf. I heard afterwards that his language at once changed. He spoke in terms of warm commendation of the British administration.

Sheikh Abdul-Khalik el-Saadat, a nephew of the last-named Sheikh, is the head of one of the oldest purely Egyptian families in Egypt. Napoleon made great efforts to ingratiate himself with one of this Sheikh's ancestors, who was at first decorated with the Legion of Honour, and on this treatment proving ineffectual to produce the required results, was bastinadoed. The present Sheikh is a member of the Legislative Council. He is ignorant of public affairs, but, by reason of the respect in which his family is held, exerts, or at all events might exert a certain amount of influence. I used to see a good deal of him at one time, but eventually, for reasons on which I need not dwell, I had to drop his acquaintance.

Sheikh Mohammed Abdu was an "Alim" of a different and, I should add, a very superior type to those of his brethren whom I have so far described. He was one of the leading spirits of the Arábi movement. When I came to Egypt in 1883, he was under a cloud. Good-natured Tewfik, acting under British pressure, pardoned him, and made him a judge.[1] He did his work well and honestly. Sheikh Mohammed Abdu was a man of broad and enlightened views. He admitted the abuses which have sprung up under Oriental Governments. He recognised the necessity of European assistance in the work of reform. But he did not belong to the same category as the Europeanised Egyptian, whom he regarded as a bad copy of the original. He was anti-Khedivial and anti-Pasha, not that he would have objected to a certain degree of Pashadom if he could have found good Pashas, but in his experience he had met but few Pashas who were good. In fact, Sheikh Mohammed Abdu was a somewhat dreamy and unpractical but, nevertheless, genuine Egyptian patriot; it were perhaps well for the cause of Egyptian patriotism if there were more like him. But, regarded from the point of view of possible politicians of the future, there were some weak points in the armour of Mohammed Abdu, and of those who follow his teaching. Mr. Stanley Lane Poole remarks that an upper-class Moslem must be "a fanatic or a concealed infidel."[2] This dilemma, in a somewhat different form, has presented difficulties to those Christians who look to the letter rather than to the spirit of Christ's teaching. It presents far greater difficulties to strictly orthodox Moslems, who look almost exclusively to the letter rather than to the spirit of their faith. I suspect that my friend Abdu, although he would have resented the appellation being applied to him, was in reality an Agnostic. His associates, although they admitted his ability, were inclined to look askance at him as a "filosouf." Now, in the eyes of the strictly orthodox, one who studies philosophy or, in other words, one who recognises the difference between the seventh and the twentieth centuries, is on the high road to perdition.

---

[1] Mohammed Abdu was, in 1899, appointed Grand Mufti. He died in 1905.

[2] *Studies in a Mosque*, p. 111.

The political importance of Mohammed Abdu's life lies in the fact that he may be said to have been the founder of a school of thought in Egypt very similar to that established in India by Syed Ahmed, the creator of the Alighur College. The avowed object of those who belong to this school is to justify the ways of Islam to man, that is to say, to Moslem man. They are the Girondists of the Egyptian national movement. They are too much tainted with a suspicion of heterodoxy to carry far along with them the staunch conservative Moslem. On the other hand, they are often not sufficiently Europeanised to attract the sympathy of the Egyptian mimic of European ways. They are inferior to the strictly orthodox Moslem in respect to their Mohammedanism, and inferior to the ultra-Europeanised Egyptian in respect to their Europeanisation. Their task is, therefore, one of great difficulty. But they deserve all the encouragement and support which can be given to them. They are the natural allies of the European reformer. Egyptian patriots—*sua si bona norint*—will find in the advancement of the followers of Mohammed Abdu the best hope that they may gradually carry out their programme of creating a truly autonomous Egypt.[1]

---

[1] For many years, I gave to Mohammed Abdu all the encouragement in my power; but it was uphill work, for, besides the strong antagonism which he encountered from conservative Moslems, he was unfortunately

I give yet one further sketch of a typical "Alim." Sheikh Mohammed Beyram, who is now, alas! dead, was one of my best friends in Egypt. He was, moreover, one of the most remarkable types with which I have met in the course of my Eastern experience. He looked like a thorough gentleman. I have rarely seen a more striking figure than that of this grave Oriental, with his high intellectual forehead, refined features, melancholy eyes, dignified mien, exquisite manners, and graceful costume, who would sit with me by the hour[1] and sing a dirge over the decadence of Islam. Moreover, Sheikh Mohammed Beyram not only looked a gentleman; he was one. In no country have I come across a man of more elevated and refined feelings, or one whose

---

on very bad terms with the Khedive, and was only able to retain his place as Mufti by relying on strong British support.

In my Annual Reports I frequently spoke of him in high terms, and no one regretted his premature death more sincerely than myself. At the same time, I must confess that I experienced a shock in reading some of the revelations in Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's book. Mr. Blunt's views on Egyptian affairs appear to have been mainly based on what he heard from Mohammed Abdu, whom he calls (*Secret History, etc.* p. 7) a "great philosopher and patriot." Notably, I read with surprise and regret (p. 489) the following statement of Mohammed Abdu's: "Sheykh Jemal ed Din proposed to me, Mohammed Abdu, that Ismail should be assassinated some day as he passed in his carriage daily over the Kasr-el-Nil bridge, and I strongly approved, but it was only talk between ourselves, and we lacked a person capable of taking lead in the affair." Without going into the ethics of tyrannicide, it will be sufficient to say that the civilised world generally is disposed to look askance at patriots, and still more at philosophers, who are prepared to further their political aims by resorting to assassination.

[1] One of the obstacles which lie in the path of the European when he wants to arrive at the true opinion of the Oriental is that the European, especially if he be an official, is almost always in a hurry. If, he thinks, the Oriental has anything to say to me, why does he not say it and go away? I am quite prepared to listen most attentively, but my time is valuable and I have a quantity of other business to do; I must, therefore, really ask him to come to the point at once. This frame of mind is quite fatal if one wishes to arrive at the truth. In order to attain this object, the Oriental must be allowed to tell his story and put forward his ideas in his own way; and his own way is generally a lengthy, circuitous, and very involved way. But if any one has the patience to listen, he will sometimes be amply rewarded for his pains.

opinions and actions were less tainted with worldly self-interest, than this Tunisian aristocrat.[1] Few things have given me a more unfavourable impression of native Egyptian society than that the fine qualities of this really eminent man—whose appearance and character were alike remarkable, whose private life was irreproachable, whose religious faith was founded on a rock, whose patriotism was enlightened, and whose public aims were noble — should have been scarcely recognised by the herd of Pashas, place-hunters, and greedy Sheikhs, who were not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoe. When he went down to his grave, none but a few knew that a star, which under happier auspices might perhaps have been of some magnitude, had fallen from the political firmament of Egypt, or perhaps, it would be more correct to say, of Islam. Pope's fine lines well describe my honoured friend :—

Statesman, yet friend to truth ! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear !
Who broke no promise, served no private end,
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.

Mohammed Beyram was a devout Moslem. His faith was far more earnest than that of Mohammed Abdu, and men of a similar type. The subject which mainly interested him was how to bring Islam and its ways into harmony with modern society ; in other words, how to square the circle ; and in discussing the sundry and manifold branches of this question with him, any tendency to disparage the Mohammedan religion at once disappeared. From the point of view of the moralist, criticism cannot be directed against the fundamental principles of the faith, but only against the abuses which have sprung up and which now obscure its primitive simplicity. Mohammed Beyram, regarded, not as a practical politician, but as a believer in the faith of Islam, was, in fact, a type of the best class of Moslem, a type which is, unfortunately, of rare occurrence. He looked sadly out over a world which appeared to him to have gone mad; he saw all that was noble in the faith which he revered stifled by parasitic growths; he noted that Islam was tottering to its fall by reason of internal decay; he did not so much fear the advance of needy disreputable Europe, for he knew that, though the Moslem might be robbed and cheated, there was still a hope for Islam so long as its moral code and the material benefits it conferred were only contrasted with the practice and principles of adventurers who were the dregs of European civilisation; but he knew that the tap of the northern drum, which had been heard in the streets of Cairo and might ere long be heard in those of Stamboul, brought more than the dragoon and the rifleman in its wake; his instinct taught him that the institutions, which his forefathers had cherished, must in time crumble to the dust when they were brought face to face with the lofty principles which were inscribed on the Englishman's banner. He was not blind to these things and, albeit he still clung tenaciously to the skirts of the Prophet of Arabia, he cried out in the agony of his spirit: "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" And the answer he gave to himself was that which was delivered by the patriarch Job when the world was young: "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil, that is understanding." On that common ground, the Moslem of the Mohammed Beyram type could meet the Christian, and discuss matters of common interest without stirring the fires of religious strife. But when the discussion took place, how melancholy was the result! The Moslem and the Christian would agree as to the nature of the fungus which was stifling all that was at one time healthy in the original growth; they would appreciate in like fashion the history of its extension; but, whilst the sympathetic Christian would point out with courteous but inexorable logic that any particular remedy proposed would be either inefficacious or would destroy not only the fungus but at the same time the parent tree, the Moslem, too honest not to be convinced, however much the conviction might cost him pain, could only utter a bitter wail over the doom of the creed which he loved, and over that of the baneful system to which his creed has given birth. We may sympathise, and, for my own part, I do very heartily sympathise, with the Mohammed Beyrams of Islam, but let no practical politician think that they have a plan capable of resuscitating a body, which is not, indeed, dead, and which may yet linger on for centuries, but which is nevertheless politically and socially moribund, and whose gradual decay cannot be arrested by any modern palliatives however skilfully they may be applied.

---

[1] Mohammed Beyram belonged to the Beylical family of Tunis, and, on his mother's side, was descended from the Moorish kings of Spain. His ancestors held the highest offices in Tunis without intermission for 300 years.

I have dwelt on the characters of these few individuals, not in order to disparage some, or in order to deliver a panegyric on others, but because each of those who have been depicted may to some extent be regarded as one type of the hierarchical class. It must not, however, be supposed that the Ulema are the only members of the hierarchy. A crowd of Imams (preachers), inferior Kadis, and others may be considered as affiliated to the Ulema. These are all so many agents scattered over the face of the country who keep alive religious sentiment and hierarchical influence. The special point to be noted for the purpose of the present argument is that the attitude of the whole of the hierarchy, from the highest "Alim" to the smallest teacher in a "Kuttab,"[1] has generally been more or less hostile to the work of the British reformer in Egypt. This was, indeed, inevitable. The hostility of the hierarchy is, however, based on somewhat different grounds from that of the Pashas. In respect to one point, indeed, the sentiments of the two classes coincide. Both are inspired by an instinct of self-preservation. At the time when the British occupation took place, both were in the enjoyment of privileges which they had abused, and the continuance of which they thought was threatened. Both had a pecuniary interest in resisting reform. Whilst the Pasha feared lest the fellaheen, whom he had for so long plundered, should, under the aegis of England, escape from his grasp, the "Alim," on the other hand, was somewhat nervous lest the Englishman, in spite of his protestations that he would not interfere in religious matters, might some day begin to ask unpleasant questions about the appropriation of funds belonging to religious endowments and such like matters; and the "Alim" would resent this, for although there are some honourable exceptions, he is but too often so profoundly self-deceived that he considers it an essential portion of the relations between man and his Maker that a few privileged persons should be allowed to appropriate to their own use funds which were intended to be applied to the maintenance of Mosques, the feeding of the poor, or other charitable objects. But, in addition to this cause of suspicion, based on self-interest, there is this further point to be borne in mind that, as guardians of the citadel of

---

[1] The school attached to a Mosque, where the Koran is taught.

Islam, the hierarchy naturally represent the *ne plus ultra* of conservatism. Hence, the representatives of the Mohammedan religion mistrusted the English reformer even before he began to reform, both by reason of his creed, and because they could not help suspecting him of some sinister intentions in the direction of shaking the foundations of their ancient faith. In spite of the Englishman's care and tenderness in dealing with them, their religion, and their vested interests, some of them will mistrust him all the more, the more he succeeds in introducing reforms for which they have no sympathy. They will continually expect that their turn is coming next.

Turning from the hierarchy to the squirearchy, it will be found that, as we descend the social ladder, we enter strata where the prejudice entertained against the alien and the Christian is more or less mitigated by recognition of the material benefits conferred by the reformer. The squirearchy consists, for the most part of Omdehs (village mayors) and Sheikhs of villages. These are generally landed proprietors on a small scale. They occupy a position midway between the Pasha and the fellah. Many of them are sturdy, honest yeomen who are well deserving of respect. Others are inclined to cringe before the Pashas and to bully the fellaheen. I should add that these latter tendencies, which were especially marked in the pre-reforming days, are rapidly disappearing.

As to the submissiveness of the village Sheikhs, the following picture drawn by a careful observer of Egyptian social life was, at one time, by no means exaggerated. The scene is the court of a Mudirieh. The Pasha is presiding. "Gradually the court becomes more and more crowded with brown-skinned and brown-mantled country people. The village mayors and village patriarchs (Sheikhs) are summoned into the divan. With a deep obeisance, they go through the usual form of lifting dust from the smooth marble floor and pressing it to their lips as a mark of respect. . . . A Decree is read, and the people are required to signify their assent to it, and bind themselves to obey it. 'Right willingly,' answer the honourable village mayors with one voice, 'as your Excellency commands; we are thy slaves and the slaves of our Sovereign; nothing but good comes from thee; thy opinion is our opinion.' 'Then seal the document,' says the Governor; and the heads of the communes, one after the other, give their brass seal to the scribe, who smears it with ink, and fills the sheet with their important names. When the Sheikh has sealed, the villager does so likewise, although he has only a glimmering of what it is that he has pledged himself to."[1]

When the English took Egyptian affairs in hand, the submissiveness of the Sheikhs to the Pashas had been somewhat tempered by recent events, for the backbone of the Arábist party, in so far as that party represented a national movement and not a military mutiny, was to be found amongst this class. The greater part of the yeomanry of the country were sympathisers with Arábi; he was of their kith and kin; they looked to him to deliver them from the usurer and the Pasha. Arábi ruled for a moment. During that short period,

Chaos umpire sat,
And by decision more embroiled the fray
By which he reigned.

Though, at the time of the Arábi revolt, the Sheikh class suffered from the general disorder, though even the short experience which they gained of the manner in which Arábist principles were put in practice led the most intelligent amongst the Sheikhs to doubt whether it was wise to hand themselves and their cause over to a mutinous army, nevertheless, when order was restored, they fell back on the recollection that Arábi to some extent represented the ascendency of Sheikhdom in substitution for that of Pashadom. They never forgot that, had not England thrown her weighty sword into the scale, the Turco-Egyptian Pasha and his satellites would have been swept into the sea, and that the Sheikh class would have thus been left to plunder the fellaheen alone, instead of being obliged to content itself with whatever escaped from the rapacity of the Pashas. To all outward appearance, the ancient submissiveness to Pashadom returned after Tel-el-Kebir. When the Pasha gave the order, the village Sheikh, with smiles on his lips and curses in his heart, would pay considerable sums of money, which the Pasha, after levying a contribution for his personal use, would devote to fireworks in honour of a ruler for whom the Sheikh in reality felt but little sympathy. When, in 1893, the relations between the British Government and Abbas II. were somewhat strained, the Sheikh, always acting under orders, would form part of a deputation to congratulate the ruler of his country on his courage and patriotism.[1] But for all that, his submissiveness was the old submissiveness with a difference. He was anxious to have it whispered behind the scenes to the diplomatic representative of England that, though he was constrained to all this lip-service, in reality he meant nothing by it; that he was in deadly fear; and that his one hope was that England would stand firm and save him from being again cast into the jaws of Pashadom.

---

[1] Klunzinger, *Upper Egypt*, p. 73.

---

[1] I give in an Appendix to this chapter one amongst many letters from the Sheikh class, which was shown to me at this time. It shows a capacity for trimming which is characteristic.

Moreover, when Moukhtar Pasha, the representative of the Khalif, came to Egypt, very mixed feelings were excited in the minds of the village Sheikhs, who let the British Consul-General know that, in spite of the spiritual connection, they did not want to be brought into any closer connection with their Khalif or his agents; on the contrary, that they preferred to receive water for their fields at the hands of the English engineer. Moreover, as time went on, the minds of the squirearchy underwent some change. In spite of all outward and visible signs of submissiveness, they are now no longer mere Egyptian clay in the hands of the Turkish potter, as in the pre-reforming days. Years of British rule have taught them that they too have their rights, and it may be that they would not remain so passive as of yore if those rights were infringed.

I have said that when the English came to Egypt, many of the village Omdehs and Sheikhs, though they cringed before the Pashas, revenged themselves by bullying the fellaheen. The latter part of this statement merits some further development.

The village is the administrative unit in Egypt. The Omdehs and Sheikhs are the corner-stone on which the edifice of provincial society rests. They have certain duties to perform. They are considered responsible for public security. If, in past times, a crime was committed in the neighbourhood of the village, and if the criminal was not forthcoming, the imperious rulers of the country had some rude methods for ensuring his arrest. The usual practice was to make the Sheikhs suffer vicarious punishment,[1] until the criminal was produced. This generally had the desired effect. The head of the village was responsible for the assessment and, to a certain extent, for the collection of the taxes. He furnished gangs for the corvée. He was answerable for obtaining recruits for the army. The exercise of these functions supplied him with opportunities for illicit gain; for, provided the taxes were paid, the corvée gangs forthcoming, and a sufficient number of youths delivered annually to feed the vultures of the Soudan, no questions were asked. The village Sheikhs were practically uncontrolled. They naturally abused the privileges of their position, and developed into petty tyrants.

---

[1] Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (*Egypt and the Egyptian Question*, p. 261) tells a characteristic story, which was related to him by an old fellah, of how Mehemet Ali paid a visit to his village and ordered the

The village Sheikh, like the Pasha and the "Alim," felt an instinct of self-preservation alive within him at the approach of the English reformer. He foresaw that his privileged position would be shaken. Neither did his prophetic instinct err. For, before the Englishman had been long at work, the corvée was abolished; the assessment and collection of the taxes, as well as the recruiting for the army, were taken out of the hands of the village authorities. So far, indeed, did the zeal of the English reformer go, that the Sheikh began to mutter *Nolo episcopari*. The position of the head of a village became no longer lucrative. The Sheikh class began to doubt whether, under these circumstances, it was worth while to assume responsibilities from which little or no compensating advantage was to be derived. The Englishman, on the other hand, found that not the least

---

Sheikhs to produce two robbers, who were supposed to be hiding in the neighbourhood. The Sheikhs stated that they were unable to do so. "In the twinkling of an eye, all six Sheikhs were lying on the ground, face downwards, receiving the bastinado from a dozen of His Highness' stalwart attendants." Before the bastinadoing process had proceeded far, one of the Sheikhs said that he knew where the criminals were Two men were accordingly produced, and at once hanged.

difficult part of his administrative task was to preserve what was good and useful in the village system, whilst purging it of all that was bad.

It may, therefore, be said that in the pre-reforming days, the tyranny of the Sheikhs over the fellaheen was only one degree less oppressive than that of the Pashas. In some respects, indeed, the oppression of the former was more burdensome and more irksome than that of the latter; for the Sheikh was always present in the village, whilst the Pasha was distant, and only swooped down occasionally to plunder and to flog. There are a number of Arabic proverbs which owe their origin to the sentiments entertained by the fellaheen as regards the Pasha and the Sheikh respectively. For instance, "Let the lion eat me at a mouthful rather than the mosquito piecemeal." Another is, "The tyranny of the cat is better than the justice of the mouse."

The feelings of the Sheikh class towards the English were, therefore, divided. On the one hand, they were willing to rely on English aid for protection against the tyranny of the Pashas; on the other hand, they resented the interference which curbed the exercise of their own time-honoured tyranny over the fellaheen. As time went on, and the benefits of the British occupation became year by year more apparent, the former of these two sentiments probably predominated over the latter; but any praise which the Sheikh class might perhaps otherwise have accorded to English efforts on behalf of the Egyptian population, was tempered by the idea that the Englishman was, after all, only carrying out the original programme of Arábi. A few of the most observant did, indeed, recognise that in Arábi's hands the programme would not have been executed with so much skill and intelligence. On the other hand, no inconsiderable number regretted that Arábi was not allowed to have his way, not only because he was their compatriot and co-religionist, but also because they thought, and perhaps with some degree of reason, that whilst Arábi would have executed that portion of the English programme which involved placing a restraint upon the Turco-Egyptian Pasha, he would have been more careful of their interests in that he would have allowed the tyranny of the Sheikh to continue unchecked.[1]

I now turn to that class of Egyptian society which, if not the most interesting, is certainly more deserving of sympathy than any other. It is unnecessary to describe at any length the character and condition of the blue-shirted Egyptian fellah. Every Nile tourist knows what he is like. Any handbook of Egypt can tell all that the practical politician need know of his past history. Every writer on Egyptian affairs has touched, in a greater or less degree, on the sufferings which he has undergone at the hands of a long succession of despotic rulers. From time immemorial, his main end in life has been to find some means for evading the extortionate demands of the tax-gatherer. "The Romans," Mommsen says, "assure us that the Egyptians were proud of the scourge-marks received for perpetrating frauds in taxation."[2] As it was in the days of Augustus, so was it in the days of Ismail. "It is a point of honour," Mr. McCoan wrote in 1877, "to bear any amount of 'stick,' if, by so doing, the impost or any part of it can be evaded. The fellah, indeed, who will not do so is despised by even his own wife as a poltroon, and if, after only a dozen or score of blows, he disgorges the coin which endurance of fifty might perhaps have saved, the conjugal estimate of his spirit is generally shared by his fellows."[1] Next to evading taxation, the fellah above all things wishes to evade military service. His favourite method of attaining this object was, at one time, not to cut off a finger, as was done by the poltroons[2] of the Roman army, but to sacrifice an eye.

---

[1] These remarks were written some few years ago. I leave them unaltered, as they were at one time quite correct. But they are so to a less extent now. The recollection of the events of 1882 is rapidly dying out. Other influences have taken the place of the Arábi myth. Further, whatever defects may still exist generally amongst the Sheikh class, I have little doubt that their moral and intellectual standard is now considerably higher than was the case in 1882.

[2] *The Provinces of the Roman Empire,* vol. ii. p. 253.

In dealing with the fellah, the English politician had mainly two points to bear in mind. The first point was that the immense majority of the population of Egypt are fellaheen. The fellaheen, therefore, deserve consideration on account of their numbers. This fact would at first sight appear sufficiently obvious, but it was at one time frequently forgotten by Pashas and others.

The second point was that, as the fellah, at the time of the British occupation, possessed no privileges, unless the liability to be indiscriminately robbed and flogged can be called a privilege, there would be no difficulty in dealing with him on the ground that the reformer was laying a rash hand on his vested rights. As he stood on the lowest rung of the social ladder, there was no one below him over whom he could tyrannise.

The main problem which the Englishman had to solve was this: How to confer on the fellah the privilege of no longer being robbed and flogged, without shattering the edifice, which, rotten as it was, had still kept Egyptian society together for centuries past. In dealing with this problem, one thing was certain. The fellah had everything to gain and nothing to lose by the work of the English reformer. There cannot, in fact, be a shadow of doubt that the fellah has gained enormously owing to the efforts made on his behalf by the Englishman. He has gained far more than any other class of society, because in his case there is absolutely no disadvantage to throw into the scale against the immense benefits which he has received.

---

[1] *Egypt as it is*, p. 26.

[2] The derivation usually given for the word "poltroon"—*pollice truncus*—is, however, more than doubtful. See Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*.

Does the Egyptian fellah appreciate the benefits which have been conferred on him? Does he entertain any feelings of gratitude towards his benefactor? These are questions which are interesting in themselves, and, moreover, are not altogether devoid of political importance.

After a fashion, the fellah appreciates very highly the benefits which have been conferred on him. Ignorant though he be, he is wise enough to know that he is now far better off than he was prior to the British occupation. He would shudder at any notion that the old régime was to be re-established. Moreover, in a vague sort of way he probably recognises that these benefits have been conferred upon him by the Anglo-Saxon race. But he is singularly wanting in the logical faculty. He is incapable of establishing clearly in his mind that, for the time being at all events, good administration and the exercise of a paramount influence by England are inseparably linked together. It has been the misfortune of the English in Egypt that the classes who, under their political programme, most benefited by British rule, were those who were least of all able to make their voices heard. The fellaheen are, politically speaking, ciphers. They are too apathetic, too ignorant, and too little accustomed to take the initiative, to give utterance in any politically audible form to their opinions even when they have any. Moreover, in the event of a premature withdrawal of the British garrison, they would probably not form any definite opinion as to the results of the measure until positive proof had been afforded to them that a fatal mistake had been made. Then it is possible that, having tasted the fruits of good administration and being emboldened by the freedom conferred on them by the Englishman, they might turn round and rend the Pashas.

As to whether the fellaheen are grateful or the reverse, it is to be observed that gratitude is not, generally speaking, a national virtue. Moreover, many of those who have mixed in native society in Egypt consider that ingratitude is one of the predominant features of the Egyptian character.[1] However this may be, the ordinary fellah is kindly and jovial. If he were left to himself he would certainly not entertain any unfriendly feelings towards the Englishman, in spite of the difference of race or creed; indeed, although he might not be effusively grateful, it may be doubted whether on his own initiative he would ever do anything to render himself open to the charge of ingratitude. Unfortunately, he is emotional, ignorant, and credulous. He is easily led away by lying agitators and intriguers. Under the influence of ephemeral passion, his sense of gratitude for past favours would disappear like chaff before the wind. At such a moment, the same man, who was but yesterday blessing the English engineer for watering his fields, might to-morrow, should the occasion arise, brain his benefactor with a "nabout"[2] in a fit of savage passion. It should be added that, immediately afterwards, he would probably be very sorry for what he has done.

My reason tells me that this is so. Yet I hate to believe it. A diplomatist, and especially a diplomatist in Egypt, sees a good deal of the ignoble side of life. Constant dealings with corrupt Pashas, scheming adventurers, and other hostile elements, who think that all is fair in business or politics, are apt to shake one's faith in the goodness of human nature. More than this, the question of whether the fellaheen of Egypt are happy or unhappy, grateful or ungrateful, though a matter of some interest to themselves and of somewhat more than philanthropic interest to others, is, after all, only one of the factors which must contribute to guide the action of the British diplomatist. He has to think, or at all events the Government whom he is serving has to think of the interests of the farmers of Yorkshire, the fishermen of Yarmouth, the artisans of Sheffield, and their brother taxpayers, who are his own countrymen, and he has to ask himself, what is it to these whether or not the Egyptian fellaheen are flayed alive by greedy Pashas and tyrannical Sheikhs? All this I know. *Mais pour être diplomate, on n'est pas moins homme.* Even a matter-of-fact official may be allowed to cherish what is perhaps an illusion. He may be pardoned, especially if he has lived much in the inconsistent East, if he nourishes a trace of inconsistency in the recesses of his heart, if he struggles against being reasoned out of a noble hope. Often during the long period when my countrymen and myself were engaged in what at one time seemed the hopeless task of evolving order out of the Egyptian chaos, have I repeated to myself those fine lines of the Latin poet which Pitt quoted when he dealt the first blow to the infamous traffic in slaves:

---

[1] "The natives of Egypt in general, in common with the Arabs of other countries, are (according to our system of morals) justly chargeable with a fault, which is regarded by us as one of great magnitude; it is want of gratitude."—Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 366.

[2] A "nabout" is a staff, which is sometimes loaded with lead

> Nosque ubi primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis,
> Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.[1]

---

[1] Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, p. 146. The quotation is from the first *Georgic*, 250-251.

Was the prophecy of the English statesman, I asked myself, about to be fulfilled? Is it destined that, under the guiding hand of England, the rays of true civilisation shall at last pierce into the oldest and most interesting corner of the dark African continent, and lighten with their sunshine even the mud hut of the Egyptian fellah? Is the Englishman to show, by precept and example, that usury and drunkenness are not the only handmaids of Christian education? Pray Heaven it may be so! When Sir Robert Peel committed that great and wise act of political apostasy for which his name will ever live in English history, he said that although he had suffered much in separating himself from his former political friends, he still hoped that he would "leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill in those places which are the abode of men whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow." I may perhaps be permitted to paraphrase this memorable passage. In spite of the ignorance and alleged ingratitude of the Egyptians, I still dare to cherish a hope that the present and future generations of fellaheen, who certainly earn and will continue to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, will remember with some feeling akin to gratitude that it was the Anglo-Saxon race who first delivered them from the thraldom of their oppressors, who taught them that they too had the right to be treated like human beings, who conferred upon them the material blessings which follow in the train of true Western civilisation, and who opened out to them the path which leads to moral progress and elevation of thought. The time, it may be hoped, is past when Egypt[1] and the

---

[1] Hoary Memphis boasts her tombs alone,
The mournful types of mighty power decayed.
SHENSTONE, *Elegy XIV.*

Egyptians could be cited as one of the most striking contrasts the world has ever known between past grandeur and modern decadence.

In any case, whether the Egyptian fellah be capable or incapable of gratitude, there can be no doubt that it was the hand of England which first raised him from the abject moral and material condition in which he had for centuries wallowed. If, now that he is beginning to emerge from his slough of despond, I thought that he would be permitted to relapse into his former state, and that the work on which, in common with many of my countrymen, I have spent the best years of my life would be undone, then would I say *τότε μοι χάνοι εὐρεῖα χθών.* I hasten to add that I not merely hope, but strongly believe that no such disappointment of my political hopes is, in the smallest degree, probable.

The last category of Moslem dwellers in Egypt of whom it is necessary to speak is the Bedouins, semi-sedentary and nomad. Of these, but little need be said. A number of proverbs are current in Egypt indicative of the dislike entertained by the dwellers in the valley of the Nile to those in the desert. Of these, the best known is, "Better the tyranny of the Turk than the justice of the Bedouins." The Bedouins are, in fact, supposed to be very cruel and unjust. Another proverb is in the form of a narrative: "The Bedouin told my wife that there was no water in the well. She at once went hastily to the well with four buckets." This is in allusion to the alleged selfishness and untruthfulness of the Bedouins.[1]

On the other hand, the Bedouins despise the fellaheen, whom they consider an unmanly race. The Bedouins occasionally complain that in the matter of military service, from which they are exempted, the Egyptian Government wish to "reduce them to fellaheen." It is wise policy to keep them contented and to encourage them to settle on the cultivated lands. Otherwise, they are apt to turn into marauders and to cause disturbances of various sorts. Their ancient privileges have, therefore, for the most part, been preserved to them. This treatment has proved effective. The figures of the census of 1897 compared with those of 1882 show that, since the British occupation, there has been a strong tendency on the part of the Bedouins to abandon their nomadic habits, and to settle in the villages bordering on the desert. Broadly speaking, the Bedouins, for the purposes of the present narrative and argument, may be considered a *quantité négligeable*. They did not exercise any considerable influence on the course of British policy in Egypt.

---

[1] Burckhardt (*Arabic Proverbs*, p. 123) gives another: "Entertai the Bedouin, he will steal thy clothes."

# APPENDIX

## Translation of a Letter from a Sheikh of Keneh to a Sheikh of the Mosque of Seyyidna-Hussein at Cairo.

*February* 2, 1894.

During these days, the talk has been great among the people, and tongues have wearied as to the difference which had sprung up, so they said, between our Lord the Khedive and Baring. There were those who said: "The English have many soldiers, and must prevail." Others said, and among these many of the Ulema: "HE has said (Grace be on Him!) how often hath a small force overcome a great one by the aid of the Almighty, be His name exalted!"

Then it was reported in our districts: "Behold the Infidel is overcome, and Baring has fled in haste to his own country. The days of Abbas shall be like those of his forefathers; the people and the Pashas shall be bread for him to eat; the foreigner will be his servant."

So we took counsel, and thought to send a mission from Keneh to say: "Good news! Effendina has returned to his fit place!" For the poet has said: "The wise man gives honey to the bear in the day of his fatness, but the fool smites him on the head with a pole."

Then, while we still pondered, came a message from Cairo that Baring and his English walked in the city like leopards among dogs, and that Abbas had withdrawn into his castle and sat scowling, for the Government of Baring had said: "Be meat that we may devour you!" So we were hushed, and resolved to say nothing of any deputation. And, of a truth, I think that it is not easy, and will be less so in time to come, to send deputations of good tidings to our Lord the Khedive.

Now, I had myself thought that the end could only be thus, for I have seen the English and I know them. But aloud I said: "The blessing of God on the deputation, and the aid of His mighty arm! for are we not all Moslems and brethren? (God increase the might of Islam!)"

But, O my friend! I beg you to keep this letter very secret, for the poet has said: "Ill is his lot in the court whom the Kadi has heard to whisper, 'There is justice amongst the unbelievers.'"[1]

---

[1] A change has been made in the last paragraph without altering the general sense. The original was too coarse to be reproduced.

# CHAPTER XXXVI

## THE CHRISTIANS

**The Copts—The conservatism of their religion—Their character—Their attitude towards the English—The reform movement—The Syrians—Their position—Their unpopularity—Their attitude towards the English—The Armenians—Their subserviency to the Turks—Nubar Pasha—His son Boghos—Yacoub Pasha Artin—Tigrane Pasha—The Egyptians should not be weighed in European scales.**

The Egyptian native Christians may be divided into three categories, viz. (1) the Copts; (2) the Syrians; and (3) the Armenians. Of these, the most important in point of numbers are the Copts. The census of 1897 showed that there were at that time 608,000 Copts in Egypt. Of these, some few are Catholics and some Protestants, but by far the greater number belong to what is termed the Orthodox Church.

Beyond mentioning that the Orthodox Copts are Monophysites, and that they separated from the main body of the Christian Church subsequent to the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451, it is needless to dwell on the special tenets of the Coptic creed. One point in connection with the religion of the Copts should, however, be mentioned, inasmuch as it is intimately connected with an understanding of the general characteristics of the Coptic community. The Christianity of the Copt has been as conservative as the Islamism of the Moslem. "The Eastern Church," Dean Stanley says, "was, like the East, stationary and immutable; the Western, like the West, progressive and flexible. . . . The theology of the East has undergone no systematising process. The doctrines remain in the same rigid yet undefined state as that in which they were left by Constantine and Justinian." If a religious belief cannot adapt itself to the requirements which are constantly cropping up as the world grows older, one of two things will probably happen. Either society advances and the religious belief is stranded and eventually forgotten, or the creed holds society in its grip and bars the way to advancement. It is the proud boast of the Christian religion, and more especially of the Protestant variety of that religion, that it is not obliged to choose between either of these alternatives. It possesses sufficient elasticity to adapt itself to modern requirements.

It is true that the Coptic Christian has remained stagnant, but there is this notable difference between the stagnation of the Moslem and that of the Copt. The Moslem stands in everything on the ancient ways because he is a Moslem, because the customs which are interwoven with his religion, forbid him to change. "Swathed in the bands of the Koran, the Moslem faith, unlike the Christian, is powerless to adapt itself to varying time and place, keep pace with the march of humanity, direct and purify the social life, or elevate mankind."[1] The Copt, on the other hand, has remained immutable, or nearly so, not because he is a Copt, but because he is an Oriental, and because his religion, which admits of progress, has been surrounded by associations antagonistic to progress. In the case of the Copt, it is not necessary, as in that of the Moslem, to strike off any religious shackles before he can proceed along the path of political and social advancement. The reformer in temporal matters does not at every turn find himself face to face with the priest, who in the name of religion or religious custom bars the way to progress. From the point of view of principle, the difference is immense. From the point of view of practice, the difference has so far been slight. In spite of his religion which, as the history of the world has shown, admits of progress, the Copt has been arrested by barriers very similar to those which have applied in the case of the Moslem. It is, indeed, natural that such should have been the case. The minority must of necessity submit to the influence of the majority. In India, the Moslems have to a certain extent become Brahminised. In spite of the unbending tenets of their creed, custom and association have been too strong for them. The Hindoos, being in a majority of five to one, have copied nothing from the Moslems. The Moslems, on the other hand, have insensibly assimilated certain Hindoo ideas, notably the idea of caste. The Indian Moslem will not eat with the Christian, although there is nothing in his religious code which forbids him to do so, and although his brother-Moslem, who is not exposed to Hindoo association, does so willingly. The same principle has applied in the case of the Egyptian Copts. The Moslem has in no way become Christianised. The Copt, on the other hand, has, without knowing it, assimilated himself to the Moslem. "The modern Copt has become from head to foot, in manners, language, and spirit, a Moslem, however unwilling he may be to recognise the fact."[1] Coptic women are almost as secluded as Moslems. Coptic children are generally circumcised. The marriage customs and funeral ceremonies of the Copts are very similar to those of Moslems.

---

[1] Sir William Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 594.

Much has been written about the general

---

[1] *Upper Egypt, etc.*, p. 89.

characteristics of the Copts. All generalisations about the attributes of a nation or of a class are apt to be imperfect, and must necessarily do injustice to exceptional individuals. The Copts have somewhat specially suffered from hasty generalisation. Until of recent years, when by reason of the British occupation a flood of light has been thrown on everything connected with Egypt, most Englishmen who paid any attention to the national characteristics of the "Modern Egyptians" took their ideas from the classic work, which has immortalised the name of Lane. Now Lane was a strong Mohammedan sympathiser. He knew but little about the Copts. All the information he supplies about them appears to have been based on the testimony of one "respectable Copt" whose acquaintance he happened to make,[1] and who certainly gave a most unfavourable account of his co-religionists. "One of the most remarkable traits," Lane says, "in the character of the Copts is their bigotry. They bear a bitter hatred to all other Christians, even exceeding that with which the Moslems regard the unbelievers in El-Islam. . . . They are, generally speaking, of a sullen temper, extremely avaricious, and abominable dissemblers; cringing or domineering according to circumstances. The respectable Copt, to whom I have already acknowledged myself chiefly indebted for the notions which I have obtained respecting the customs of his nation, gives me a most unfavourable account of their character. He avows them to be generally ignorant, deceitful, faithless, and abandoned to the pursuit of worldly gain, and to indulgence in sensual pleasures."[2]

---

[1] "I had the good fortune to become acquainted with a character of which I had doubted the existence, a Copt of a liberal as well as an intelligent mind; and to his kindness I am indebted for the knowledge of most of the facts related in the following brief memoir."—*Modern Egyptians,* vol. ii. p. 273.

[2] *Modern Egyptians,* vol. ii. p. 295.

This judgment appears to err greatly on the side of severity. Even if it be admitted that the unpleasing qualities, which Lane indicates, are sometimes to be found amongst the Copts, it is to be observed that the Copts have no monopoly of those qualities. Bigotry, ignorance, dissimulation, deceit, faithlessness, the pursuit of worldly gain, and indulgence in sensual pleasures, may, to a certain extent, be Egyptian, but it can scarcely be held that they are especially Coptic attributes. They are to be found in an equal degree amongst Egyptian Moslems.

Sir John Bowring, who next to Lane is probably the best of the less recent authorities on Egyptian national characteristics, passes a more kindly judgment on the Copts. Although, he says, the Turks have always considered the Copts as "the pariahs of the Egyptian people, yet they are an amiable, pacific, and intelligent race, whose worst vices have grown out of their seeking shelter from wrong and robbery."

Lane appears to me to be prejudiced in this matter. His statement is, to say the least, much too highly coloured as regards the present race of Egyptians, whether Moslems or Copts. Bowring, on the other hand, hardly states the whole case. My own experience leads me to the following conclusions: first, that, owing to circumstances unconnected with the difference of religion, the Egyptian Copt has developed certain moral attributes which also belong to the Egyptian Moslem; secondly, that, owing to circumstances which are accidentally connected with, but which are not the consequences of his religion, the Copt has developed certain intellectual qualities, in which, mainly from want of exercise, the Egyptian Moslem seems to be deficient; thirdly, that for all purposes of broad generalisation, the only difference between the Copt and the Moslem is that the former is an Egyptian who worships in a Christian church, whilst the latter is an Egyptian who worships in a Mohammedan mosque.

The question now under discussion is one of great interest, for it involves nothing less than this—has the Christian religion, taken by itself and apart from all other influences, been able in the course of centuries to develop moral qualities in the Coptic community superior to those generally attributable to the non-Christian community by which the Copts have been surrounded?

I am reluctantly constrained to answer this question in the negative.[1] It is, so far as I am aware, impossible to indicate any moral quality in respect to which the Copt, with his 1500 years of Christianity behind him, is notably superior to the Moslem. The moral code by which the relations between man and man are regulated is, in the case of the Copt, no more elevated than in the case of the Moslem. In spite of his religion and his monogamous habits, the Copt has developed no high ideal of womanhood. More than this, in respect to one important point the Moslem occupies a more elevated moral position than the Copt. The former, when untainted by European association, is distinguished for his sobriety—a moral quality which is noticeable to a less extent amongst the Copts.[2] It is, of course, true that the defects of Coptic character are not attributable to their religion. It is also true that the Copt has been exposed to the influence of a somewhat debased form of Christianity; that that influence has been exerted under specially unfavourable conditions; and that the defects in the Coptic character are, more often than not, "the vices of servitude."[1] Nevertheless, to those who believe in the moralising and civilising influence of the Christian religion, it is disappointing to find that, in differentiating the Egyptian Copt from his compatriots who are Moslems, it is not possible to indicate any one special virtue, and to say that, in spite of every adventitious disadvantage, the Christian religion has fostered and developed that virtue, and has thus given a certain moral superiority to the Christian over the Moslem. Such, however, appears to be the case. I fear it must be admitted that so far the Copt has stood before the world as a Christian who, by reason of adverse circumstances, has been unable to profit to any great extent by his Christianity.

---

[1] It is, however, to be remembered, looking to the past history of the Copts, that they deserve great credit for the steadfastness with which they have adhered to their faith in the face of persecution. As to the persecution see, *inter alia*, Makrizi's *History* (Malan's translation), p. 88. In Dr. Butler's admirable work, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, a full account is given of the persecution to which the Copts were at one time subject.

[2] "Intoxication is a frequent vice amongst the Copts."—Bowring's *Report*, p. 8. See also *Cairo*, p. 206.

Turning from moral attributes to mental qualities, it cannot be said that, in any of the higher branches of intellectual life, the Copts have shown any superiority over the Moslems. But, under the stress of circumstances, they have developed certain mediocre aptitudes. As compared with the unbending Moslem, they have shown a greater degree of flexibility in adapting themselves to a few of the elementary requirements of civilisation. They have seized on those crumbs from the Moslem table which the Moslem was too proud, too careless, or too unintelligent to appropriate to himself. They made themselves useful, indeed almost indispensable to their oppressors, and the aptitudes which they thus acquired during the period of oppression, ought to have stood them in good stead when the flood-tide of European civilisation set in. For the European will recognise that the Copt possesses in some degree that accurate habit of thought which is wanting in the Moslem, and which is the god at whose altar the logical European is an unceasing devotee. He will accord a lukewarm welcome to the Copt, not on account of his religion, but because the Copt can add and subtract, because he knows his multiplication table, because he can measure the length and breadth of a plot of ground without making any gross error in the measurement, and because, although his system of accounts is archaic, at the same time it is better to be in possession of a bad system of accounts than, like the Egyptian Moslem, to have scarcely any system at all. "The Copts," Bowring said, "are the surveyors, the scribes, the arithmeticians, the measurers, the clerks, in a word, the learned men of the land. They are to the counting-house and the pen what the fellah is to the field and the plough."

---

[1] *Cairo*, p. 208.

What, however, was the attitude of the Copts towards the English reformer?

The question is of some interest and importance, for although the Englishman, strong in the righteousness of his cause, was confident of the ultimate result, at the same time, looking to all the obstacles in his path, to the inertia of the mass of the population whom he wished to befriend, and to the activity of various hostile elements of Egyptian society, who would assuredly never cease from harrying him, he would have been glad to welcome the most humble allies. And where would the Englishman more probably find allies than amongst a body of persons who were bound to him by a general community of religion, who had suffered from the oppression of the Moslem and notably from that of the Moslem Pasha, and who possessed various humble aptitudes, which it would be in the interest of the Englishman to turn to account, and in that of the Copt to display to the best advantage in the presence of the Englishman? The premises of this argument were seemingly correct; the inference was plausible; but, as we are dealing with the illogical East, we need not be surprised to find that it was erroneous. For, in fact, the Copt was, in the first instance at all events, animated by no very friendly feelings towards the English reformer.

The principles of strict impartiality on which the Englishman proceeded were foreign to the nature of the Copt. When the British occupation took place, certain hopes began to dawn in his mind. I, said the Copt to himself, am a Christian; if I had the power to do so, I would favour Christians at the expense of Moslems; the English are Christians; therefore—and it was here that the Copt was guilty of a sad *ignoratio elenchi*—as the English have the power, they will assuredly favour Christians at the expense of Moslems. When the Copt found that this process of reasoning was fallacious, and that the conduct of the Englishman was guided by motives which he had left out of account, and which he could not understand, he was disappointed, and his disappointment deepened into resentment. He thought that the Englishman's justice to the Moslem involved injustice to himself, for he was apt, perhaps unconsciously, to hold that injustice and absence of favouritism to Copts were well-nigh synonymous terms.

The Copt, moreover, had another cause of complaint against the English reformer. Not only was he disappointed that no special favours were accorded to him, but he saw with dismay that, under British auspices, he was in danger of being supplanted by his rival, the Syrian Christian.

When the English took Egyptian affairs in hand, the accountants in the employment of the Egyptian Government were almost exclusively Copts. Their system of accounts was archaic. Moreover, it was well-nigh incomprehensible to any but themselves. All tendencies in the direction of reform were resisted, partly from conservatism, and partly from instincts of self-preservation, for it was clear that if the system were simplified to such an extent as to be comprehensible to the uninitiated, the monopoly, which the Copts had heretofore enjoyed, would be endangered. Finding that he could not untie the knot, the Englishman, with characteristic energy, cut it. The Coptic system of accounts had manifestly to be abolished, and as the Copts either could not or would not assist in the work of abolition, they had to give way to other agents. In the early days of the English occupation a good many Syrians, therefore, took the places of Copts. The reform was necessary, but it naturally caused much dissatisfaction amongst the Coptic community.

The English, therefore, found that the Copts were, during the early days of the occupation, generally unfriendly, but they did not show their unfriendliness in any very overt form, for there is one quality in which the Copt excelled. He was an accomplished trimmer. He wished to pose both as Anglophobe and as an Anglophile according to the requirements of his audience, and according to the part which for the moment appeared to be most in harmony with his personal interests. His remarkable powers of intrigue, which were developed in the days of Moslem oppression, here came to his assistance. I should add that, as the occupation was prolonged, the benefits derived from the British administration of Egypt were gradually more and more recognised by the Copts.

They began to understand that they had to rely mainly on their own efforts, and those efforts were often crowned with success. Many of the Copts now in the Government service are very capable men. A Copt of marked ability (Boutros Pasha Ghali) has occupied for a long time, and with great credit to himself, the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Before leaving this branch of the subject, it should be mentioned that for many years past a large number of Copts have been educated in the excellent schools established throughout Egypt by the American missionaries. Many of the younger generation speak English, and show a tendency to develop moral and intellectual qualities greatly superior to those of their fathers, to whom the description given above mainly applies. This process of education has produced its natural result. The young Copts see that, unless they wish to be left behind in the race of life, they must bestir themselves. Once having eaten of the tree of knowledge, they begin to recognise the decrepitude of their antique hierarchical and educational systems, and they are stimulated in the acquirement of this knowledge by the fact that the Syrian, by reason of his superior intellectual attainments, is taking away the birthright of the Copts. The young Copt, starting with Christianity developed by Western education in his favour, has sufficient versatility to draw from this fact the conclusion at which the slow-thinking Moslem, weighted by his leaden creed, arrives more tardily. If I am to outstrip the Syrian, the young Copt says, it is of no use simply cursing him; I must abandon my ancient ways, and strive to be his equal. So a movement has been developed, the object of which is to apply Coptic religious endowments to useful purposes; to question the necessity of devoting funds, drawn from the general body of the community, exclusively to the maintenance of a number of priestly sinecures; to establish seminaries, where those who wish to enter holy orders may learn something more than how to mumble a few set formulæ expressed in an archaic language, which has been dead for the last two centuries;[1] to devote any surplus funds to secular education; and, generally, to instil life into a body which has been stagnant since its earliest creation. The movement naturally meets with resistance from the hierarchy. At first, it appeared as if this resistance would be at once overcome. The crisis happened to take place at the moment when Abbas II. succeeded to Tewfik I. An enlightened Prime Minister (Mustapha Pasha Fehmi), acting in general conformity with English ideas, favoured the views of the Coptic reformers. The Coptic Patriarch, who was the incarnation of the most stolid form of conservatism, was sent to one of those desert monasteries, where in the early days of Christianity the misguided anchorites of Egypt tortured their bodies in the belief that they were doing God service. But a turn in the political wheel brought about a different order of things. Riaz Pasha, who was a conservative Moslem, succeeded to power. Moslem opinion was adverse to the cause of the Coptic reformers. This opposition was based on two grounds. In the first place, the staid Moslem was shocked at rebellion against legitimate hierarchical authority, neither did he care to inquire whether that authority was wisely or unwisely exercised. In the second place, the Moslem, conscious of his own defects, was alarmed at the appearance of a new rival in the shape of a Coptic progressionist. These influences being in the ascendant, the Patriarch was recalled from his eremitic retreat. The British diplomatist, who alone could have prevented this consummation, stood aside. However much he might sympathise with the cause of Coptic reform, his worldly knowledge told him that he would act unwisely in thrusting himself into the midst of a quarrel between the temporal and spiritual authorities of a creed which was not his own. For the time being, therefore, the anti-reformers triumphed. But the triumph is assuredly but temporary. Time is on the side of the reformers; they must eventually gain the day in spite of Patriarchal opposition. The reformers themselves are not without the faults which belong to political youth and inexperience. Their self-esteem is somewhat inflated. Nevertheless, we may wish them well. "The Copts," Bowring said, "will probably occupy no small part of the field in the future history of Egypt." Until recently, there appeared but little prospect of this prophecy being fulfilled; but this latter-day movement of the young Copts affords ground for hope. If it be continued, the Coptic community may in time develop attributes which will generate and foster self-respect. When they have done this, they will deserve and will obtain the respect of others. They will be carried on by the stream of social and political progress, instead of being engulfed or remaining stranded on the shore.

---

[1] M. Cogordan, at one time French Consul-General in Egypt, whose premature death was deplored by all who were privileged to know him, wrote: "Le Père Vansleb a vu à Assiout, en 1672, un vieillard qu'on lui présentait comme le dernier Égyptien parlant le Copte. Mais il est probable que bien d'autres le parlèrent après celui-ci; la petite ville de Nagadeh passe pour être celle où cet idiome se conserva le plus tard, jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle probablement."—*Relation du Voyage fait au Couvent de Saint Antoine,* p. 116.

Turning from the Copts to the Syrians, it is to be observed that there are a certain number of Moslem Syrians resident in Egypt, but, from a political point of view, the Christian Syrians are far more important than the Moslems. In the following remarks, therefore, attention will be confined to the Christians.

It is not possible to state how many Syrian Christians there are in Egypt. Without doubt, the Syrians constitute a very small community as compared with the Copts. They derive their importance, however, not from their numbers, but from the positions which they occupy. Considerable numbers of upper and upper-middle class Syrians are Government employés. In almost every village in Egypt, a usurer is to be found who, if he is not a Greek, is generally a Syrian. There are numerous Jews in Egypt; nevertheless, it is correct to say that the Syrians occupy to a great extent in Egypt the positions held by the Jews in many countries of Europe. Thus, on the one hand, the Syrians encounter the jealousy of those Moslems and Copts who are aspirants for public employment. On the other hand, they are regarded by the mass of the population with those feelings of dislike which improvident debtors usually entertain towards creditors who hold them in their grip. The Syrian moneylender has the reputation of being singularly grasping and merciless. Moreover, his exactions have been facilitated by the onward march of civilisation in Egypt, for the Code Napoléon, which was suddenly applied without sufficient modification to the regulation of the monetary transactions of the country, affords little protection to the poor and ignorant debtor, whilst it is capable of becoming a terrible engine for legalised oppression in the hands of a grasping creditor.

It is only of recent years that the Syrians have acquired their present position in Egypt. Lane and Bowring scarcely allude to them. When, however, Ismail Pasha began to Europeanise the

Egyptian administrative services, it was natural that a demand should arise for intelligent employés, who could speak both Arabic and French, in which latter language most of the European work of the country was conducted, and who, from their training and habits of thought, possessed some aptitude for assimilating European administrative procedures. It was at the time hopeless to expect much assistance from the ordinary unassimilative Moslem who, as the movement swept by him, merely looked up for a moment with a scowl from the Koran, and then relapsed into a state of political torpor. The Copt was a little more helpful, but he also had developed no high degree of versatility, and, moreover, was rarely acquainted with any foreign language. When the demand for employés was first felt, the supply of Europeanised Egyptians was insufficient, and further, the Europeanised Egyptian was often a less useful agent than his social and political kinsman, the Syrian. The Syrian's opportunity, therefore, came, and he profited by it. He possessed all the qualifications required. Arabic was his mother tongue. He was generally familiar with French, having been educated at some French college in Syria. He was versatile, pushing, and ambitious. His confidence in his own capacity was as boundless as that of the esurient Greek of the Roman satirist. He possessed in no small degree the talent, which was particularly useful in a cosmopolitan society, of being all things to all men. He found, therefore, little difficulty in jostling himself into some position of authority, and once there, being animated by strong feelings of race affinity, he opened the door to others amongst his countrymen, and took little heed of the charges of nepotism which were brought against him.

When the English took Egyptian affairs in hand, circumstances again favoured the Syrian. For the Englishman, himself generally ignorant of Arabic and only semi-conversant with French, looked over the Egyptian administrative chaos, and said to himself: Where am I to find subordinates who will assist me? The Moslem is for the time being, useless; the Copt is little better. I am debarred by political and financial reasons from employing Europeans. Under these circumstances, the Syrian was a godsend.

It is probable that the employment of Syrians did at one time more towards rendering the British régime unpopular amongst certain classes in Egypt than anything else. For the more intelligent Moslem, when he gradually woke up to what was going on around him, said to himself: The Englishman I understand; I recognise his good qualities; he brings to bear on his work, not only knowledge, but energy superior to my own; I do not like him, but I am aware that he means well by me, and I see that he confers certain material benefits on me, which I am very willing to accept; but what of this Syrian? Am I not as good as he? If native agents be required, why should not my kinsman be employed rather than this alien, who possesses neither the advantages of the European nor those of the true Egyptian? Accordingly, the Moslem, followed at no great distance by the Copt, poured forth all the vials of his wrath on the Syrian. Even Tewfik Pasha, whose views were habitually temperate, warmed to fever-heat when he spoke of the Syrians, whilst the same subject roused Riaz Pasha's more sturdy Islamism to the boiling-point of vituperation. In 1890, Riaz Pasha proposed to issue an edict, which virtually prohibited all Syrians from entering the Egyptian service. Then the British diplomatist had to step forward and to point out in a cold-blooded, accurate, European fashion that, so long as red-coated soldiers were walking about the streets of Cairo, no absolute proscription on the ground of race or creed could be tolerated; moreover, that, from the point of view of equity and common sense, a distinction should be drawn between those Syrians whose families resided in Syria, and who had merely come to Egypt to make their fortunes, and those who, though of Syrian origin, had been born and bred in Egypt, and who were, therefore, to all intents and purposes, Egyptians. The result was a compromise. Syrians who had lived for fifteen years in Egypt were admitted to the public service on the same terms as Egyptians.

The Mohammedan sentiment on this subject is very natural. The Egyptian Moslems are, in fact, now in the transitionary phase through which their co-religionists in India have already passed. When, after the events of 1857, all the paraphernalia of European administrative systems were introduced into India, the more subtle and assimilative Hindoo everywhere got the better of the slow-moving Moslem. In course of time, however, the latter woke up to the fact that there was need for self-exertion; and accordingly, if all accounts be true, he is now running neck and neck with the Hindoo, having possibly cast aside some of the obstructive customs which hang on to the skirts of his creed before he could attain the goal. The Egyptian Moslem must of necessity undergo the same process. He will find that protective laws against Syrian and Coptic encroachments will be of little avail, but, if he braces himself to the work, he may yet beat the Syrian with the latter's own weapons. He must, however, bestir himself, or he will be outstripped in the race. It is difficult to predict what will become of the Mohammedan religion if the Moslem wins. It will possibly suffer slightly in the excitement of the contest.

The Syrian, equally with the Copt, has to a certain extent developed "the vices of servitude." He has been obliged to bend before Moslem oppression or European intellectual superiority, and the process of adapting himself to Moslem caprice, or of imitating European procedures and habits of thought, is not calculated to develop the manly qualities. Nevertheless, whether from a moral, social, or intellectual point of view, the Syrian stands on a distinctly high level. He is rarely corrupt. There are many gradations of Syrian society. A high-class Syrian is an accomplished gentleman, whose manners and general behaviour admit of his being treated on a footing of perfect social equality by high-class Europeans. His intellectual level is also unquestionably high. He can do more than copy the European. He can understand why the European does what he does, and he is able to discuss with acuteness whether what is done is wisely or unwisely done. He is not by any means wanting in the logical faculty. It would, in a word, be wholly incorrect to say that he merely apes civilisation. It may be said with truth that he really is civilised. In this respect, he is probably superior, not only to the Copt, but also to the Europeanised Egyptian, who is but too often a mere mimic.

There is yet one further point to be considered as regards the Syrians. What was the attitude of the Syrian towards the British reformer? This question was at one time a never-ending source of difficulty to the Syrian himself, for he was torn with conflicting emotions. His French education had predisposed him to look askance at everything English. The Englishman's direct, common-sense mode of procedure, and his scorn for formalities, were foreign to the subtle, formalistic mind of the Syrian, whose tendencies were ultra-bureaucratic. These considerations, coupled with a certain amount of resentment at insular haughtiness, led the Syrian to dislike the Englishman. On the other hand, was it not possible that in the long run it would pay better to show English rather than French proclivities? Amidst the doubts which hung over the future of Egypt, it was difficult to give any positive answer to this question. Under the circumstances, the best thing the Syrian could do was to be Anglophile or Francophile according to the requirements of the moment. He would even, under the pressure of self-interest, occasionally emit sparks, which to the uninitiated might appear to emanate from the forge of Egyptian patriotism. But in reality his heart, or perhaps it should rather be said his head, was attracted by the theoretical perfection of French administrative systems. He had no sympathy with the English or with English methods, though he rendered lip-service to the Englishman and gladly accepted anything which the Englishman had to give him. This view held good more especially at the commencement of the British occupation, for, as time went on, the Anglophobia of the Syrians was, to say the least, greatly diminished in intensity.

Lastly, something should be said of the Armenians. The Armenian community in Egypt is small. It consists for the most part of shopkeepers. The political importance of the Armenians, however, is derived from the fact that, almost ever since the dynasty of Mehemet Ali was founded, a few Armenians of distinction have occupied high positions under the Egyptian Government. The Copts have, for the most part, never occupied any but subordinate posts in the Egyptian administration. The Syrians, in spite of their ability, have so far never been able to push beyond places of secondary, though considerable, importance. Armenians, on the other hand, have attained the highest administrative ranks, and have at times exercised a decisive influence on the conduct of public affairs in Egypt.

The number of upper-class Armenians in Egypt is insufficient to justify my attempting any broad generalisation of Armenian characteristics based on personal observation. But I may say that those few Armenians with whom I have been brought in contact appear to me to constitute, with the Syrians, the intellectual cream of the near East.

There is one point about the Armenians which is worthy of note. Observe a middle-class Armenian enter the room of a Turkish Pasha. On arriving at the door, he will make several profound obeisances. The Pasha, without rising from his seat, will, with contemptuous condescension, motion to him to sit down, but the Armenian will not do so at once; he will cross his hands in front of his body, cast his eyes on the ground, sidle along the wall or shuffle gradually forward without ever lifting his feet from the floor; at last, he will sink slowly down on the edge of a chair or divan, join his knees in front of him, cross his hands on his breast, and in this attitude of profound humility will wait until the lordly Pasha thinks fit to address a few words to him. A highly educated or highly placed Armenian will not, indeed, go through all this pantomime. Moreover, the younger Armenians are less deferential to the Turks than their fathers. But no Armenian, in the presence of a Turkish Pasha, can ever forget that he is a Christian raya and that the Turk is his oppressor; neither can this be any matter for surprise, for the oppression of the Turk has, indeed, in the case of the Armenians, been extreme.

The most distinguished of the present generation of Armenians in Egypt was unquestionably Nubar Pasha, to whose character and aptitudes incidental allusion has already been made, and of whom it will become necessary to speak more fully at a later period of this narrative.

Nubar Pasha's son, Boghos Pasha Nubar, is a man of marked ability. He at one time occupied, with great credit to himself, the post of Egyptian member of the Railway Administration, and, since his retirement from the service, has taken a most useful and intelligent interest in public affairs.

Yacoub Pasha Artin is a highly cultivated gentleman, who has done excellent work in the cause of educational reform.

But perhaps one of the most typical Armenians in Egypt was Nubar Pasha's son-in-law, Tigrane Pasha, who for a long time occupied the post of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and who subsequently became Foreign Minister.[1] He was a highly educated gentleman of polished manners. He spoke French perfectly; in fact, French was the language in which he was most at home. He spoke English well. He knew no Arabic, and but little Turkish. Without being, from a political point of view, a Gallophile, his habits of thought were cast in a French mould. Most of the young Egyptians of the early days of the occupation, although by no means always sympathisers with the aims and policy of the French Government, were saturated with ideas which had their origin in French education, in association with Frenchmen, and in the fact that they were more conversant with French than any other European literature.

---

[1] Tigrane Pasha, to the great regret of all who knew him, died in 1904. Although I often disagreed with him, I preserve the most pleasant recollection of our long and intimate personal relations.

One of the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon race is that when they take possession or semi-possession of a country, which does not belong to them, they are apt in one respect to forget the position which they occupy towards the inhabitants. They are conscious of their own good intentions; they earnestly desire to govern the people of the country well and justly; they cannot understand how any one can question the excellence of their motives; and they look with much dislike and suspicion, which is not at all unnatural, on all who place obstacles in the way of their praiseworthy designs being executed. Thus, forgetful of the fact that they are not dealing with the inhabitants of Kent or Norfolk, the English speedily apply the term "loyal" to those who co-operate with them, and the term "disloyal" to those who display hostility or merely lukewarm friendship.

From this point of view, Tigrane Pasha was far from being "loyal," neither can any moral blame be imputed to him for the degree of disloyalty which he at times displayed. He was not an Anglophobe in the ordinary sense of the term, but he disagreed with the broad lines of British policy in Egypt. Personal ambition may have had something to do with this mental attitude. It is possible that the class to which Tigrane Pasha belonged,—unless, indeed, as is not improbable, it was swept away at the first breath of discontent from the *alumni* of the El-Azhar University,—would occupy positions of greater importance in the world of Egyptian politics if British influence were diminished than those to which they can attain whilst that influence remains paramount. It may be, also, that, in order to remove the taint of being a Christian and an alien ignorant of the vernacular language, Tigrane Pasha was obliged to display a somewhat more ardent degree of patriotism in the cause of his adopted country than would have been necessary had he been, in fact as well as in name, a real hall-marked Egyptian struggling for the cause of Egypt. But it is doubtful whether Tigrane Pasha was consciously influenced by either of these considerations. It is more probable that he honestly thought that the Egyptians, that is to say, the Europeanised Egyptians, of whom for all practical purposes he may be said to have been one, were capable of governing Egypt without any considerable degree of British assistance, and certainly without the presence of a British garrison in the country.[1] In holding this opinion he was certainly wrong, but the fact that he did entertain an opinion of this sort, though it may have afforded ground for criticising his reasoning powers, afforded no ground whatever for moral reprobation. Tigrane Pasha was, in fact, a perfectly honourable and straightforward gentleman, with somewhat doctrinaire views, whose standard of public and private morality was in no way inferior to that of men of honour in any European country.

It is, however, from the intellectual and not from the moral point of view that the study of Tigrane Pasha's character was mainly of interest. It is here that his national—that is to say, Armenian, not Egyptian—characteristics came out in strong relief. Tigrane Pasha's mind may be characterised as having been Franco-Byzantine, that is to say, the foundation was Byzantine, whilst the superstructure was French. He was, intellectually speaking, the direct descendant of those Orientals who, in the early days of Christianity, engaged in endless disputes over barren and almost incomprehensible points of theology. He would have revelled in the subtleties submitted to the decision of the Council of Nice, but he would probably never have come to any definite conclusion as to whether Arius or Athanasius was in the right. He was very intelligent, particularly about matters of detail, and quick-witted, but was often incapable of grasping the true point at issue. When any plain, practical question had to be decided, he would sometimes rush off into an *a priori* discussion of some principle, which was only remotely connected with the matter in hand. On the other hand, when some broad question of principle was at stake, Tigrane Pasha would split hairs over a minor issue, which was almost incomprehensible, or which was at all events devoid of importance to the non-Byzantine mind. In political affairs, he had but little idea of proportion. He endeavoured to understand European, and especially British politics,—a rock on which many Orientals have split,—and as the result of his studies, he was generally able to give the most plausible reasons for arriving at conclusions, which were usually erroneous. To make use of a French expression, *Il prenait des vessies pour des lanternes.* His minor premiss appeared to him to be of such importance, that he was apt to forget the existence of his major premiss. His mind refused to accept a simple inference from simple facts, which were patent to all the world. The very simplicity of the conclusion was of itself enough to make him reject it, for he had an elective affinity for everything that was intricate. He was a prey to intellectual over-subtlety—*Graecorum ille morbus*, as it was termed by Seneca.

---

[1] There is some reason for believing that Tigrane Pasha's political views were a good deal modified before his death. During the last few years of his life, he was not in office, and, moreover, suffered from very bad health. The consequence was that, to my great regret, I saw less of him than at previous periods. I cannot, therefore, speak with confidence on this point.

Tigrane Pasha was the *âme damnée* of a succession of Egyptian Ministries. He always proffered advice, which he honestly considered was in the best interests of Egypt; yet on most occasions of importance, the result of following his advice was to produce an effect the opposite of that which he had intended. His main desire for many years was to diminish the power of the English in Egypt, and he became instrumental in augmenting their power. From time to time, he laboriously constructed a diplomatic house of cards, which he thought must produce the required result. When one house of cards was overturned by a movement of the Englishman's little finger, he was not dismayed. He did not see that the way to get rid of the Englishman was, not to oppose him, but to co-operate with him. Untaught by experience, he set to work to construct some other flimsy fabric, which also disappeared at the first tiny blast of the British diplomatic horn. The motives, which led Tigrane Pasha into a number of honest but very palpable errors, are worthy of respect. Those errors were due to the Franco-Byzantine frame of mind, which is hypercritical, and which is, moreover, unwilling to adopt a severe process of inductive reasoning. In politics, it is essential to ascertain the facts correctly before coming to any conclusion. This Tigrane Pasha was apt to forget. His sympathies drove him to a certain conclusion; he was wont to accept that conclusion, and to let the facts, on which the conclusion ought to have been based, take care of themselves.

With one exception, to which allusion will presently be made, the various elements which make up native Egyptian society have thus been described. Some of the judgments which have been passed may appear harsh. They have, however, been written with an object, which will now be explained.

At the period of history of which this narrative treats, it happened that Egypt had to be Europeanised. The English were the main agents in this process of Europeanisation. It is true that the English reformers attempted in some measure to Egyptianise themselves. They were possessed of little social, but of much political and administrative elasticity, which enabled them to adapt themselves and their procedures to strange circumstances more readily than would have been the case with some other members of the European family. At the same time, the Egyptian had to meet the Englishman more than half-way. European civilisation, though not absolutely a bed of Procrustes, is not very elastic. Broadly speaking, in spite of every effort, the bed could not be made to fit the Egyptian; the Egyptian had to adapt himself to lying on the bed. Viewed in this light, it is more important to know what the Egyptian is from the point of view of the educated European, than it is to inquire what Europeans, whether educated or the reverse, are from the point of view of the Egyptian. I have, therefore, endeavoured to depict the Egyptians of different classes of society as they appear in the eyes of an educated European. I have attempted to show how little suited the Egyptian is to lie on the bed which, as an incident of modern progress, has been prepared for him. I have wished to bring into relief how his religion, his history, his moral and intellectual attributes, and his social customs contribute to establish a gulf between him and his European guides. But I have no wish whatever to blame the individual Egyptian, be he Moslem or Christian, for being that which I find him to be. An Englishman who had been long resident in

China, once said: "It is the misfortune of the Chinese Government and people to be weighed in a balance, which they have never accepted, and to have their shortcomings, so ascertained, made the basis of reclamations of varying degrees of gravity."[1] This observation holds as good about Egypt as it does about China. I am aware that in the remarks made in this and the two preceding chapters, the Egyptian has been weighed in a balance which he has never accepted, and in which, moreover, it is somewhat unjust to weigh him; for, from whatever point of view we look at the Egyptian, we should never forget that he is what the accidents of his history, climate, religion, and geographical position have made him. It is useless and, indeed, hurtful to hide his defects, or to disguise from ourselves the fact that the reception of true European civilisation by a population such as that which is described above must be the work of generations. But there is no occasion to point the finger of pharisaical scorn at the Egyptians, whilst any feeling of self-congratulation that we are not as these less fortunate political publicans should surely be checked by the reflection that some, at least, of the defects in the Egyptian character are due to association with European civilisation in a debased form. Rather let us, in Christian charity, make every possible allowance for the moral and intellectual shortcomings of the Egyptians, and do whatever can be done to rectify them.

---

[1] Mr. Alexander Michie, *China and Christianity*, p. 1, 1892.

# CHAPTER XXXVII

## THE EUROPEANISED EGYPTIANS

The Europeanised Egyptians are generally Agnostics—Effects of Europeanising the East—Gallicised Egyptians—Attractions of French civilisation—Unsuitability of the French system to form the Egyptian character—The official classes generally hostile to England.

A MOMENT's reflection will show how it is that, in the peculiar political phase through which Egypt is now passing, the Europeanised Egyptian occupies a position of somewhat special importance. If the country were still governed on the lines of the old Oriental despotisms, a small number of educated Egyptians might perhaps be employed in subordinate positions, but they would be mere adjuncts; they would not truly represent the spirit of the Government. If, on the other hand, the Government and society of Egypt were farther advanced on the road to civilisation, the Europeanised Egyptian would probably be something different from what he actually is; he would have become in spirit, though not necessarily in sentiment, less Egyptian and more thoroughly European. But inasmuch as Egyptian society is in a state of flux, the natural result has been to produce a class of individuals many of whom are, at the same time, demoslemised Moslems and invertebrate Europeans.

In dealing with the question of introducing European civilisation into Egypt, it should never be forgotten that Islam cannot be reformed; that is to say, reformed Islam is Islam no longer; it is something else; we cannot as yet tell what it will eventually be. "Christian nations," Sir William Muir says, "may advance in civilisation, freedom, and morality, in philosophy, science, and the arts, but Islam stands still. And thus stationary, so far as the lessons of history avail, it will remain."[1] But little assistance in the work of reform can, therefore, be expected from the steady orthodox Moslems, who cling with unswerving fidelity to their ancient faith, and whose dislike to European civilisation often increases as that civilisation advances. The Syrians and Armenians are foreigners. The Copts, besides being Christians, are—or, at all events, in 1882, were—but little better educated than the ordinary Moslems. Having regard, therefore, to the disqualifications of his competitors, the Europeanised Egyptian naturally becomes, if not the only possible, at all events the principal agent for administering the country, except in so far as it is administered by Europeans.

Nominally, the Europeanised Egyptian is in the majority of cases a Moslem. In reality, he is generally an Agnostic. The gulf between him and the "Alim" of the El-Azhar University is as great as between the "Alim" and the European. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the gulf is not in reality greater in the former than in the latter case. For a thoughtful European will not only look with interest at the "Alim" as the representative of an ancient faith, which contains much that is highly deserving of respect; he will, if the "Alim" is a worthy specimen of his class, sympathise with him because he is religious, albeit his religion is not that of Christ. The Europeanised Egyptian, on the other hand, will often look on the "Alim" with all the pride of an intellectual *parvenu*. From the pedestal of his empirical knowledge, he will regard the "Alim" as a social derelict, who has to be tolerated, and even occasionally, for political purposes, to be utilised, but who need not be respected.

---

[1] *The Caliphate*, p. 597.

The truth is that, in passing through the European educational mill, the young Egyptian Moslem loses his Islamism, or, at all events, he loses the best part of it. He cuts himself adrift from the sheet-anchor of his creed. He no longer believes that he is always in the presence of his Creator, to whom he will some day have to render an account of his actions. He may still, however, take advantage of the least worthy portions of his nominal religion, those portions, namely, which, in so far as they tolerate a lax moral code, adapt themselves to his tastes and to his convenience in the affairs of this world. Moreover, in losing his Islamism, the educated Egyptian very rarely makes any approach towards Christianity. There are practically no cases of Christian converts amongst the educated classes. More than this, although the Europeanised Egyptian is no true Moslem, he is often as intolerant, and sometimes even more intolerant of Christianity than the old orthodox Moslem, who has received no European education. He frequently hates Christians with a bitter hatred, and he does so partly because many of the Christians with whom he has been brought in contact deserve to be hated, and partly because the Christian, in his capacity of being a European, is a rival who occupies positions, which the Europeanised Egyptian thinks he should himself occupy.

It is doubtful whether the price which is being paid, or which, at all events, may have to be paid for introducing European civilisation into these backward Eastern societies is always recognised so fully as it should be. The material benefits derived from Europeanisation are unquestionably great, but as regards the ultimate effect on public and private morality the future is altogether uncertain.[1] European civilisation destroys one religion without substituting another in its place. It remains to be seen whether the code of Christian morality, on which European civilisation is based, can be dissociated from the teaching of the Christian religion. This question can only be answered by generations which are now unborn. For the present, there is little to guide us in any forecast as to what the ultimate result will be.

It may, however, be noted that there is an essential difference between the de-moslemised Moslem and the free-thinker in Europe. The latter is surrounded by an atmosphere of Christianity: he will often, sometimes with a pang of envy, admire trustfulness and faith, in which qualities his reasoning faculties forbid him to share; if he is a politician, he will, or at all events he should recognise the utilitarian side of Christianity; he will, more often than not, reject the idea that there is no alternative presented to him but that of being either an atheist or a full believer in the Christianity of the schools; the fact that he is a free-thinker does not cut him off from association and co-operation with his friends, who may not share his disbelief or his doubts; his reason, his associations, and his hereditary qualities alike impel him to assert, no less strongly than the orthodox Christian, that the code of Christian morality must form the basis to regulate the relations between man and man in modern society. That morality has, indeed, taken such deep root in Europe that if, as would appear probable, the hold which revealed religion and theological dogma has on mankind is destined to be gradually relaxed, no moral cataclysm is to be anticipated.

---

[1] The whole of this question has been admirably treated, from the Hindoo point of view, in the second series of Sir Alfred Lyall's brilliant *Asiatic Studies.* Every European who occupies a high position in the East should study Sir Alfred Lyall's works. They display a profound knowledge of Eastern habits of thought, and a remarkable grasp of the difficulties underlying the treatment of Eastern problems.

Far different is the case of the Egyptian free-thinker. He finds himself launched on a troubled sea without any rudder and without any pilot. Neither his past history nor his present associations impose any effective moral restraint upon him. He finds that, amongst many of his own countrymen, the cause of religion is often identified with opposition to the most reasonable reforms, and in trampling indignantly on the particular religion which can lead to such results, he is disposed to cast aside religion altogether. Having cut himself loose from his creed, no barrier, save that of cynical self-interest, serves to keep him within the limits of the moral code which is in some degree imposed on the European, whose system he is endeavouring to copy. The society in which he moves does not seriously condemn untruthfulness and deceit. The social stigma with which vice of various kinds is visited is too feeble to exercise much practical effect. As he leaves the creed of his forefathers, he casts no lingering look behind. He not only leaves it, but he spurns it. He rushes blindfold into the arms of European civilisation, unmindful of the fact that what is visible to the eye constitutes merely the outward signs of that civilisation, whilst the deep-seated ballast of Christian morality, which regulates the occasionally eccentric movements of the vessel, is hidden beneath the surface, and is difficult of acquisition by the pseudo-European imitator of the European system. He calls Heaven to witness that he has cast aside all prejudices based on religion, and that he despises the teachings of his forefathers. See, he says to the European, I have my railways, my schools, my newspapers, my law-courts, and all the other things which, as I can plainly see, go to make up your boasted civilisation; in what, then, am I inferior to you? Alas! the de-moslemised Moslem, although he is wholly unaware of the defect, is inferior in one respect wherein his inferiority cannot be removed by a stroke of the pen, for the civilised European, as we understand him, though he may not be an orthodox Christian, is in spite of himself to a great extent the outcome of Christianity, and would not be what he is had he not 1900 years of Christianity behind him. "No hostility to Christian doctrine can justify indifference to the truth, that the world owes to Christianity the matured idea of Progress, and the one serious attempt to realise it."[1]

It is at present useless to speculate on the ultimate product of the forces which are now being brought into play in the Moslem world.[2] That any great accession of strength will accrue to Christianity is improbable. A revival of Islam, that is to say, the Islam of the Koran and the *Traditions*, is nothing but the dream of poetic natures whose imaginations are carried away by the attractions which hover round some incidents of this faith. Yet, as has been often observed, history records no instance of a nation being without a religion. "Man everywhere shows invincible religious tendencies."[1] It is conceivable that, as time goes on, the Moslems will develop a religion, possibly a pure Deism, which will not be altogether the Islamism of the past and of the present, and which will cast aside much of the teaching of Mohammed, but which will establish a moral code sufficient to hold society together by bonds other than those of unalloyed self-interest. The Europeanised Egyptian, as we now see him, is the first, not the last, word of reformed Moslem society. It is possible that, in course of time, some higher moral and intellectual ideal will be developed. In the meanwhile, let the European politician bear this in mind, that in the process of his well-intentioned and very necessary reforms he will do well to abstain, on utilitarian grounds, from any measure which is calculated to undermine the Moslem faith more than the strict requirements of the case demand. The missionary, the philanthropist, the social reformer, and others of the same sort, should have a fair field. Their intentions are excellent, although at times their judgment may be defective. They will, if under some control, probably do much good on a small scale. They may even, being carried away by the enthusiasm which pays no heed to worldly prudence, effect reforms more important than those of the administrator and politician, who will follow cautiously in their track, and perhaps reap the results of their labours. Nevertheless, let those who have to guide the machine of state beware how they wittingly shake the whole moral fabric of Eastern society. It is dangerous work, politically, socially, and morally, to trifle with the religious belief of a whole nation.

---

[1] Liddon, *University Sermons*, 1873, p. 33.

[2] M. Leroy-Beaulieu makes the following remarks as regards the dissolvent effect exercised by Western civilisation on Judaism: "Qu'est ce qui a conservé le juif à travers les siècles et l'a empêché de disparaître au milieu des nations? C'est sa religion. Or, ces rites protecteurs, cette cuirasse ou cette carapace d'observances qui l'a defendu durant deux mille ans, et que rien ne pourrait transpercer, notre esprit occidental l'a entamée. . . . Si le judaisme, débilité, venait à se décomposer et à se dissoudre, qu'adviendrait-il du juif? Formé et saufgardé par sa religion, le juif ne risque-t-il point de s'évanouir avec le judaisme?"—*Israel chez les Nations*, p. 77.

The first point, therefore, to be borne in mind in dealing with the Europeanised Egyptian is that he is generally an Agnostic. The second point is that the term Europeanised, when applied to the Egyptian educated in Europe, though not a misnomer, is lacking in precision. For the majority of Europeanised Egyptians at the commencement of the British occupation, and for some years subsequent to that event, were, in truth, Gallicised Egyptians.

---

[1] Boyd Carpenter, *The Permanent Elements of Religion*, p. 77.

When Mehemet Ali took some tentative steps towards introducing European civilisation into Egypt, he naturally turned to France for assistance. He was haunted with the idea that England would one day take possession of Egypt.[1] An increase of French influence in Egypt would, he thought, constitute some barrier against British aggression. A number of young Egyptians were, therefore, sent to France to be educated, and several schools were established in Egypt at the heads of which French professors were placed. Thus, the first impress of civilisation given to Egypt was through the medium of the French language, which, it may be added, has during the latter part of the last century been supplanting Italian as a common language for the use of divers nationalities throughout the Levant. The French thus obtained a start which they have never lost. The Government and the people of France, being gifted with more political foresight of a certain kind, and being more capable of grasping a general idea than the English, saw their advantage, and followed it up. They were aware that, if the youth of Egypt learnt the French language, they would, as a necessary consequence, be saturated with French habits of thought, and they hoped that sympathy with France and

---

[1] *Vide ante,* vol. i. p. 16, note. Sir Charles Murray, in his *Short Memoir* (p. 5), says that Mehemet Ali's sympathy for the French was in some degree due to the kindness shown to him when a child by a French resident at Cawala, named Lion.

French political aims would ensue. For half a century prior to the British occupation, therefore, during which time the British Government were wholly inactive in respect to Egyptian education, no effort was spared to propagate a knowledge of French in Egypt. The agents for the accomplishment of this object have been mainly Catholic priests. The great apostle of anti-clericalism in France, M. Gambetta, was careful to explain that his anti-clerical ideas were only intended for home consumption; they were not meant for export. The French Republic claims to be the defender of the Catholic Church in the East, and is very sensitive if its right to do so is in any way questioned. A Republican Government and their agents, be they never so anti-clerical at home, are fully alive to the advantages of taking clericalism by the hand abroad as a useful instrument to further their political aims.

Apart, however, from any consequences resulting from the action taken either by Mehemet Ali or by the French Government, it is to be observed that French civilisation possesses a special degree of attraction, not only to the Asiatic, but also to the European races of the Levant. This point is one of considerable importance, for amongst the obstacles, which have stood in the way of the British reformer in Egypt, none is more noteworthy than that both Europeanised Egyptians and Levantines are impregnated with French rather than with English habits of thought.

The reasons why French civilisation presents a special degree of attraction to Asiatics and Levantines are plain. It is, as a matter of fact, more attractive than the civilisations of England and Germany, and, moreover, it is more easy of imitation. Compare the undemonstrative, shy Englishman, with his social exclusiveness and insular habits, with the vivacious and cosmopolitan Frenchman, who does not know what the word shyness means, and who in ten minutes is apparently on terms of intimate friendship with any casual acquaintance he may chance to make. The semi-educated Oriental does not recognise that the former has, at all events, the merit of sincerity, whilst the latter is often merely acting a part.[1] He looks coldly on the Englishman, and rushes into the arms of the Frenchman.

Look, again, to the relative intellectual attractions which the two Western races present. The Englishman is a follower of Bacon without knowing it. Inductive philosophy has become part of his nature. He instinctively rejects *a priori* reasoning. He will laboriously collect a number of facts before arriving at any conclusion, and, when he has collected his facts, he will limit his conclusion to the precise point which is proved. Compare this frame of mind with that of the quick-witted Frenchman, who, on the most slender basis of fact, will advance some sweeping generalisation with an assurance untempered by any shadow of doubt as to its correctness. Can it be any matter for surprise that the Egyptian, with his light intellectual ballast, fails to see that some fallacy often lies at the bottom of the Frenchman's reasoning, or that he prefers the rather superficial brilliancy of the Frenchman to the plodding, unattractive industry of the Englishman or the German? Look, again, at the theoretical perfection of French administrative systems, at their elaborate detail, and at the provision which is apparently made to meet every possible contingency which may arise. Compare these features with the Englishman's practical systems, which lay down rules as to a few main points, and leave a mass of detail to individual discretion. The half-educated Egyptian naturally prefers the Frenchman's system, for it is to all outward appearance more perfect and more easy of application. He fails, moreover, to see that the Englishman desires to elaborate a system which will suit the facts with which he has to deal, whereas the main objection to applying French administrative procedures to Egypt is that the facts have but too often to conform to the ready-made system. From whatever point of view the subject be regarded, the same contrast will be found. On the one side, is a damsel possessing attractive, albeit somewhat artificial charms; on the other side, is a sober, elderly matron of perhaps somewhat greater moral worth, but of less pleasing outward appearance. The Egyptian, in the heyday of his political and intellectual youth, naturally smiled on the attractive damsel, and turned his back on the excellent but somewhat ill-favoured matron.

---

[1] Shortly after the Franco-German War, in defending the French against General Blumenthal, I said, "You must admit, General, that the French are good actors." The sturdy old Gallophobe replied, "It is the only thing they can do. They are always acting." I do not at all agree with the first part of the distinguished General's view. The French can do a great many things besides act well.

In some respects it is, for his own sake, greatly to be regretted that he did so. What the Egyptian most of all requires is, not so much that his mind should be trained, as that his character should be formed. It is certain that a very high tone of morality pervades those admirable educational institutions which spring, Pallas-like, from the fertile brain of the Vatican, and most of which, in Egypt, are under French control. It is also certain that those who base their opinion of French character and morals on the light French literature of the day are wholly in error. I believe that in no country are the domestic virtues more generally cherished than in France. It has, however, to be remembered[1] that the Oriental has a remarkable capacity for assimilating to himself the worst and rejecting the best parts of any European civilisation with which he may be brought in contact. It is not from the best, but rather from the least admirable traits in the French character that those young Egyptians who have been brought under French influences, have generally drawn their moral inspirations.

It is not to be supposed that the educated Egyptian fails to note the defects of his European monitors, be they French or English. He often sees those defects clearly enough, and the result not unfrequently is that, even though he may himself become partially Europeanised, he will despise European civilisation. In what respect, he says to himself, are we Egyptians morally inferior to our teachers? We may be deceitful, untruthful, and unchaste, but we are not one whit worse than those whom we are told to regard as the ultimate product of European civilisation.[2] The result is that the Europeanised Egyptian often returns to Egypt in order to become, both by precept and example, an apostle of anti-European ideas. The conservatism of older Moslems, who regard him as a living warning that they should beware of European civilisation, becomes stereotyped on observing his behaviour and on hearing his language; whilst he himself, in spite of his partial Europeanisation, will, with an inconsistency which would be strange were we not dealing with the "Land of Paradox," hate the Europeans quite as much as the less educated sections of his own countrymen.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, vol. i. p. 59.

[2] The moral superiority of English over French training is recognised by the Egyptians themselves, and has at times been recognised by cultivated Frenchmen. Senior (*Conversations, etc.*, vol. i. p. 213) relates the following conversation: "*Hekekyan.* It is remarkable that all the Egyptians and Asiatics whom Mehemet Ali sent to England for education came back, like myself and young Stephan, Anglomaniacs; while all whom he sent to France returned disgusted with Europe. . . . *Clot* (the founder of the Egyptian School of Medicine). I have made the same remark. . . . Our students see only bad company in Paris, and are disgusted with it. In London they get, if not into the fashionable world, at least into a respectable world, infinitely superior in morals, knowledge, and intelligence to anything in the East."

The question of the effect of European, and notably French education on the rising generation of Egyptians has to be considered from another point of view. The tendency of every Egyptian official is to shirk responsibility. He thinks less of what should be done than of acting in such a manner that no personal blame can be attached to himself. This habit of thought makes the Egyptian official instinctively shrink from the British system of administration, for under that system much is left to the discretion of the individual, who is, therefore, obliged to think for himself. He flies for refuge to the French system, and there he finds administrative procedures prescribed which exactly suit his character and habits of thought. He finds that provision is apparently made for everything, to the most minute detail, in a series of elaborate codes. Entrenched behind these codes, the Europeanised Egyptian is, to his joy, relieved in a great degree from the necessity of thinking for himself. Some emergency may, indeed, occur which requires prompt action and the exercise of common sense. The Europeanised Egyptian, however, but too often does not recognise emergencies, and he spurns common sense. He refers to some article in his regulations, and maintains that he cannot depart from the provisions of that article by one hair's-breadth. The result may be disastrous, but he is indifferent as to the result; for, having conformed strictly to his orders, he cannot be blamed by his superiors. The

Egyptian official was always predisposed to be an automaton.[1] Once Europeanised—more especially if he be Gallicised—his automatic rigidity becomes more wooden than it was before.

It can scarcely be doubted that, from this point of view, French training has done little to rectify the defects of the Egyptian national character. In everything, it has tended to stereotype the Egyptian predisposition to look to the letter which killeth, and neglect the spirit which giveth life.

Scores of cases could be mentioned illustrative of the tendency to which allusion is here made. One or two instances will, however, suffice.

A case occurred of a stationmaster declining to send a fire-engine by a train which was about to start, in order to help in putting down a serious fire. He pointed with inexorable logic to the regulations, which did not permit of trucks being attached to that particular train. No exception was to be found in the code, with which he had been furnished, to meet the case of a burning town to which a fire-engine had to be despatched. Again, at one time it was the practice, if an accident occurred in the streets, not to transport the individual who had been injured at once to the hospital, but to leave him lying on the ground, whatever might be his condition, until the proper official had arrived to make a "Procès-verbal" of the facts connected with the accident. On one occasion, a doctor was sent to examine into the condition of a stationmaster, supposed to be insane. On entering the room, he was attacked and nearly strangled by the madman. He was able, after a sharp struggle, to call on two orderlies, who had been present all the time, to seize the man. They saluted and did so. On being asked why they had not interfered sooner, they replied that they had received no orders to that effect. Without doubt, they considered that the struggle on the floor, which they had witnessed, was part of some strange European process, with which they were unfamiliar, for dealing with insane stationmasters.[1]

---

[1] It has been conclusively shown by Taine and others that many of the administrative methods generally practised on the continent of Europe are not, as is very commonly supposed, the result of the French Revolution, but that they existed—often under a different form—in pre-Revolutionary days. Similarly, the idea, which is somewhat prevalent, that the extreme formalism which characterises Egyptian official life is the result of contact with Europe, though it may be partially correct, does not convey the whole truth. Mr. St. John (*Egypt and Mohammed Ali*, vol. ii. p. 419) gives a remarkable instance of the extreme formalism with which Egyptian official work was conducted in his time.

I may mention that a subordinate Egyptian official, notably a policeman, regards the preparation of a "Procès-verbal" as a proceeding of peculiar sanctity. It matters little what the document contains. Provided he can get a "Procès-verbal" prepared in due form, the Egyptian official considers that he is free from responsibility, and he is, therefore, happy. Otherwise, he feels that a certain amount of personal responsibility weighs upon him, and he is miserable. This plethora of "Procès-verbaux" has done a good deal to nip in the bud any feeble tendencies towards individualism which might otherwise have been developed.

In a word, the French bureaucratic and legal systems, although there is much to be said in their favour when they are carried into execution by a highly civilised and intelligent race such as the French, are little adapted to the formation of either competent officials or useful citizens in a country such as Egypt.

Such, therefore, is the Europeanised Egyptian. His intellectual qualities have, of late years, certainly been developed. His moral attributes have generally been little, if at all, improved by contact with Europe. The old orthodox Moslem is bound hand and foot by ancient custom based on his religion. The Europeanised Egyptian is often bound almost as fast by a set of rigid formulæ, which he mistakes for the substance, whereas they are in reality but some fortuitous incidents of European civilisation.

---

[1] These cases have already been cited in my Report for the year 1903 (*Egypt*, No. 1, of 1904, p. 78). An endless number of similar illustrations of the tendency to which allusion is made above, might be given.

Although the description given above holds generally good as regards the class now under discussion, it is to be noted that there are exceptions, and, moreover, that the exceptions are year by year becoming more numerous. Some of the younger generation of Egyptians are turning into excellent officials, especially those employed under the Department of Justice. In view of the character of the modern Egyptian, it is obviously more easy to develop a certain amount of judicial capacity than it is to train good executive officers. The judge merely has to interpret his code. The executive official must of necessity rely to a greater extent on his individual resource and judgment.

One point remains to be considered. What was the attitude of the Europeanised Egyptian towards the British reformer? After what has been already said, it is needless to dilate on this subject. Envy, dislike of British administrative systems, ignorance of the English language,[1] resentment at the stand-off manners and at the airs of conscious superiority which the Englishman, somewhat unwisely, is prone to give himself, and want of appreciation of the better side of the English character, all drove the Europeanised Egyptian in one direction. With a few exceptions, the whole class was, at the commencement of the British occupation, Anglophobe.

---

[1] This fertile source of misunderstanding is, it may be hoped, rapidly disappearing. The number of young Egyptians who understand English is steadily increasing, as also the number of British officials who speak Arabic.

It may be doubted whether of late years this Anglophobia has diminished. Indeed, indications are not wanting that, mainly by reason of the misrepresentations of the vernacular press, it has somewhat increased in intensity. It is the duty of the British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government to use their utmost endeavours to mitigate feelings of this description by sympathetic treatment, and by abstaining from passing too harsh a judgment on whatever defects they may find to exist amongst the rising generation of Egyptians. Those defects are the natural outcome of the peculiar political conditions under which the country is governed, and of the unhealthy influences to which the young Egyptians are often exposed.

# CHAPTER XXXVIII

## THE EUROPEANS

Number of Europeans—The Levantines—Their characteristics—The Greeks—Their commercial enterprise—The English—The Army of Occupation—Anglo-Egyptian officials—Feelings entertained by other Europeans towards the English—Summary of the classes friendly and hostile to England.

According to the census of 1897, there were at that time about 113,000 Europeans resident in Egypt.[1] These 113,000 persons were divided as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Greeks | 38,000 |
| Italians | 24,000 |
| French | 14,000 |
| Austrians | 7,000 |
| English (including Maltese and other British subjects, as well as the Army of Occupation) | 20,000 |
| Other nationalities | 10,000 |
| Total | 113,000 |

The classification by nationalities, though important in many respects, is misleading to this extent, that when it is said that there are 24,000 Italians, 14,000 Frenchmen, 7000 Austrians, and so on in Egypt, it is not to be supposed that there are that number of Italians, Frenchmen, or Austrians in the country possessing the special national characteristics, which are generally held to belong to the inhabitants of Italy, France, or Austria. Apart from the fact that there are a large number of protected subjects, who are often Orientals, it is to be observed that in many cases the Frenchman resident in Egypt is only technically a Frenchman, the Italian may in reality be only half an Italian in so far as his national characteristics are concerned, the Austrian is often merely a subject of the Emperor of Austria for purposes of Consular protection and nothing more. For, in truth, many individuals of these and of other nationalities are, above all things, Levantines, and the Levantines, though not a separate nation, possess characteristics of their own which may almost be termed national.

---

[1] There can be no doubt that since the census of 1897 was taken, the number of Europeans in Egypt has largely increased. I have already stated (*vide ante*, p. 129, note) that the detailed figures of the census taken in 1907 are not yet available.

Every one who has lived in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean knows what is meant by a Levantine, though a precise definition of this term is difficult, if not impossible. The Levantine can, of course, be described as a European resident in the Levant, generally in the Ottoman dominions situated in the Levant. This definition is, however, not satisfactory, for some Europeans may be born and bred in the East and pass all their lives in the Levant, without losing the special characteristics of their country of origin, or acquiring in any considerable degree those of the Levantine. In the case of others, a short residence in the Levant will suffice to produce typical Levantine characteristics. Others, again, already approached so nearly to Levantines in their country of origin, that they may almost be said to have been Levantines before they emigrated to the Levant. In fact, inasmuch as the Levantines are more or less Orientalised Europeans,[1] just as Egyptian Moslems educated in

---

[1] The process of manufacturing Levantines is at least as old as the Crusades. Thus, Mr. Stanley Lane Poole says (*Saladin*, p. 28): "The early Crusaders, after thirty years' residence in Syria, had become very much assimilated in character and habits to the people whom they had

France are Gallicised Egyptians, they necessarily present every gradation of character, from the European with no trace of the Oriental about him, to the European who is so thoroughly orientalised as scarcely to have preserved any distinctive European characteristics. A considerable number of Levantines lie midway between these two extremes. Starting sometimes with national characteristics which bear some resemblance to those of Easterns, they develop those characteristics to a still greater degree by residence in the East. They become semi-orientalised Europeans. If compared with the northern races of Europe, the predominance of the Oriental portion of their characters will come out in strong relief. If, on the other hand, they are compared with the southern European races, any process of differentiation will bring out their distinctive Oriental characteristics in a less striking manner. The majority of Levantines are recruited from the southern races of Europe, and, in respect to these more especially, their technical nationality is, from the point of view of the present argument, of slight importance. The particular Consulate at which the Levantine is inscribed is a mere accident. He is, above all things, a Levantine, though he dislikes to be designated by that appellation; for, partly because he is aware that the Levantines do not generally bear a high character, partly because he dislikes to merge his national individuality in a cosmopolitan expression, and partly because he is sensible of the material benefits which he derives from his foreign nationality, the Levantine will often develop a specially ardent degree of patriotism for the country which affords him Consular protection.

partly conquered, among whom they lived, and whose daughters they did not disdain to marry; they were growing into Levantines; they were known as *Pullani* or Creoles."

Germans and Englishmen, however long they may reside in the Levant, rarely become typical Levantines. Starting with strongly marked national characteristics, they generally preserve those characteristics more or less intact. As a class, they do not differ materially from their fellow-countrymen of the same social standing in Germany or England.

The case of the Italians, of whom there are a large number in Egypt, is different. Many of the skilled artisans in Egypt, the bricklayers, masons, carpenters, etc., are Italians. They are, as a rule, a steady, industrious race, whose presence is very useful to the Egyptians, as it enables the latter to learn various crafts requiring skill in their application. As a body, these Italians do not differ from their countrymen of the same social position in Italy. On the other hand, there are some middle-class Italians, who, with their families, have been long resident in Egypt, and who may, as a class, be considered representative Levantines. The transition from being Italian to being Levantine is, in these cases, more easy than in the case of the Englishman or the German.

Much the same may be said of the Austrians, who do not generally come from Austria proper, but from the neighbourhood of Trieste. Many of these are Jews. Their language is generally not German but Italian.

The French occupy a peculiar position. The French colony contains every gradation of type, from the most Gallic Gaul to the ultra-Levantinised Levantine. In respect to the latter class, however, the question arises of whether the Frenchman has become Levantinised, or whether the counter-process has not taken place; whether it is not that the Levantine has become Gallicised. The fact is that both processes are constantly in operation.

Next, what are the main characteristics of the Levantines? There are, of course, many Levantines—merchants, professional men, shopkeepers, and others—who are highly respectable members of society, and who carry on their business upon the same principles as they would adopt were they living at Trieste, Genoa, or Marseilles. But these are not representatives of the class, which is conjured up in the mind of the Egyptian Minister or his British adviser, when the word Levantine is mentioned. It is the misfortune of the Levantines that they suffer in reputation by reason of qualities which are displayed by only a small minority of their class. It cannot, in fact, be doubted that amongst this minority are to be found individuals who are tainted with a remarkable degree of moral obliquity. These are the Levantines who regard the Egyptians, from prince to peasant, as their prey. In days now happily past, they brought all their intellectual acuteness, which is of no mean order, to bear on the work of depredation. Whatever national defects they may have possessed in their country of origin, appear to have been enhanced when, on arrival in Egypt, they had to deal with a people who were ignorant, credulous, and improvident, and, therefore, easily despoiled; who, by reason of their own low moral standard, seemed, to a perverted mind, in some degree to justify reciprocity of low morals in dealing with them; and who, being weak and defenceless, invited spoliation at the hands of the unprincipled adventurer armed with all the strength which he drew from intellectual superiority, diplomatic support, and intimate acquaintance with all the forms and back-alleys of the Civil Code. This is the class which has to a certain extent made European civilisation stink in the nostrils of the Egyptians. The Levantines of this description have done a small amount of good by introducing European capital on a limited scale into the country. They have done a vast amount of harm by associating the name of European in the minds of the Egyptians with a total absence of scruple in the pursuit of gain. The upper-class Levantine naturally used to consider the upper-class Egyptian as his prey. The lower-class Levantine tricked the fellaheen.

The Greeks are so numerous that they deserve consideration by themselves. In 1897, there were 38,000 Greeks in Egypt. The question of who is and who is not a subject of the King of the Hellenes is a never-ending cause of dispute between the Ottoman and Greek Governments. Under what conditions of birth and residence are the Greeks, who were born and bred outside Greece and who have only casually lived in that country, to be considered Greek subjects? It is needless to dwell on the details of this wearisome question. It will be sufficient to say that, in spite of the resistance of the Egyptian authorities, most Greek-speaking Greeks generally manage to produce sufficient evidence to enable them to claim the privileges attaching to Greek nationality.

In Alexandria, which may almost be said to be a Greek town, a great many influential and highly respectable Greeks are to be found. Their presence in Egypt is an unmixed benefit to the country.[1] More than this, many of the small

---

[1] I wish to insist very strongly on this point. None have suffered more than the Greeks from the practice, which is but too common, of condemning a whole class or community because the conduct of certain individuals belonging to it is worthy of condemnation. I have the best reasons for knowing that none regret more than the very numerous high-class Greeks established in Egypt the fact that their national reputation should at times be tarnished by the behaviour of some individuals belonging to their nation. In spite of the blemishes recorded in these pages, it may be said with truth that the Greeks in Egypt have, as of old, carried high the torch of civilisation in their adopted country.

Greek traders are fully deserving of respect. Still the fact remains that a portion of the Greek colony in Egypt consists of low-class Greeks exercising the professions of usurer, drink-seller, etc. The Greek of this class has an extraordinary talent for retail trade. He will risk his life in the pursuit of petty gain. It is not only that a Greek usurer or a *bakal* (general dealer) is established in almost every village in Egypt; the Greek pushes his way into the most remote parts of the Soudan and of Abyssinia. Wherever, in fact, there is the smallest prospect of buying in a cheap and selling in a dear market, there will the petty Greek trader be found. In 1889, I visited Sarras, some thirty miles south of Wadi Halfa. It was at that time the farthest outpost of the Egyptian army, and is situated in the midst of a howling wilderness. The post had only been established for a few days. Nevertheless, there I found a Greek already selling sardines, biscuits, etc., to a very limited number of customers, out of a hole in a rock in which he had set up a temporary shop.

We may, therefore, give the low-class Greek credit for his enterprising commercial spirit. Nevertheless, his presence in Egypt is often hurtful. Whatever healthy moral and political influences remain untouched after the Turco-Egyptian Pasha, the tyrannical Sheikh, and the fanatical "Alim" have done their worst, these the low-class Greek seeks to destroy. He tempts the Egyptian peasant to borrow at some exorbitant rate of interest, and then, by a sharp turn of the legal screw, reduces him from the position of an allodial proprietor to that of a serf. He undermines that moral quality of which the Moslem, when untainted by European association, has in some degree a speciality. That quality is sobriety. Under Greek action and influence, the Egyptian villagers are taking to drink. Mr. Gladstone, in a speech which has become historical, once said that it would be a good thing if the Turks were turned "bag and baggage" out of Europe.[1] This may or may not be the case. But there can be no doubt that a counter-proposition of a somewhat similar nature holds good. It would be an excellent thing for Turkey and its dependencies if some of the low-class Greeks, who inhabit the Ottoman dominions, could be turned bag and baggage out of Turkey.

Before passing on to a consideration of the sentiments entertained by the Europeans resident in Egypt towards the English reformer, it will be as well to say something of the English themselves.

The English in Egypt may be divided into three categories, viz. (1) the non-official residents; (2) the army of occupation; (3) the officials in the Egyptian service.

The permanent British colony in Egypt is small. It consists mainly of a few merchants who reside at Alexandria, and who employ a small number of subordinate English agents to watch over their business in the provinces. The greater part of the export trade is in the hands of British firms. The Alexandrian Englishman, like most of his countrymen, is somewhat exclusive. He mixes little in foreign society. The general standard of probity in business matters amongst the English in Egypt is high. The English are, for the most part, eminently fair and reasonable. They never give any trouble. They have the great merit of attending exclusively to their own affairs. During the many years that I was Consul-General in Egypt, I do not remember an instance in which I was asked by an Englishman resident in Egypt to support any manifestly unfair or preposterous claim. The Englishman knows his rights; he knows that if they are infringed he has his legal remedy, and that it is unnecessary to apply for the support of his Consul-General. I doubt whether the representative of any other Power in Egypt could say the same.

---

[1] Mr. Gladstone was guilty of an unconscious plagiarism. Few people probably know that the expression, as applied to the Turks, originated with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, whose opinions have passed down to posterity as representing the *ne plus ultra* of Turcophilism. Such, however, is the case. Writing to Mr. Canning on September 29, 1821, Lord Stratford said: "As a matter of humanity, I wish with all my soul that the Greeks were put in possession of their whole patrimony, and that the Sultan was driven, bag and baggage, into the heart of Asia" (*The Life of Stratford Canning*, vol. i. p. 307). Canon MacColl says (*Fortnightly Review*, June 1898): "What Mr. Gladstone proposed was that the Turkish administration should 'all, bag and baggage, clear out'—not 'from Europe, but from the provinces which they had desolated and profaned.'" The difference does not appear very material.

Passing to a different stratum, there are a certain number of Englishmen in Egypt, who are employed in various unofficial capacities, and who are generally vigorous, honest, straightforward specimens of humanity, but who in exceptional cases sometimes make the British race unpopular by their bad manners and self-assertion. Their conduct is in this respect highly reprehensible. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the English dwellers in Egypt are a sturdy, self-respecting, and, therefore, respected race, who do credit to their country of origin, and whose presence is useful to their country of adoption.

Little need be said of the army of occupation. The discipline and good conduct of the British army in all its ranks are recognised by the most bitter Anglophobes. The worst that can be said of the soldiers is that some of them disgrace themselves by getting drunk off the vile liquor supplied to them in the bazaars. From the political point of view, the main characteristic of the British officer is his exclusiveness. In whatever clime he may serve, he carries his insular habits and national pastimes with him. In Egypt, he rarely mixes in any society which is not English, and he abstains from doing so, partly because of his ignorance of any language but his own, and partly because his social habits differ from those of the cosmopolitan society of the Egyptian towns. What does the Frenchman or Italian care for horse-races, polo, cricket, golf, and all the other quasi-national institutions, which the British officer establishes wherever he goes, whether his residence be in the frigid or the torrid zone? This exclusiveness has its advantages and also its disadvantages. If a French army had been in Egypt, the officers would have fraternised with the European residents. They would have been seen sitting outside every café. The result would have been, on the one hand, the creation of greater social sympathy between the army and certain classes of the urban population, and, on the other hand, the occurrence of more frequent quarrels. The British officer does not attract the sympathy, but he avoids the quarrels. He is respected. On the other hand, he does not excite any lively sentiment of sympathy or friendship. On the whole, it may be said that, from the point of view of the politician, the advantages predominate over the disadvantages. The British officers obey orders; they neither know, nor care to know anything about local politics; they rarely cause any trouble; they behave for the most part like English gentlemen. Under all the circumstances of the case, these are ideal qualities. They are qualities which were appreciated by the most astute of Egyptian statesmen, Nubar Pasha.

I was once talking to a Levantine in a Cairo street when a young British officer rode by. My friend stopped in the middle of his conversation and said: "Che bella razza! Come sono forti e *puliti*!" That was what most struck him—that the British officers were physically strong, and, moreover, that they were washed. I was struck with the expression. I fancy it represents the opinions of a good many Southerners.

At a later period of this narrative, the positions held by the British officials in the Egyptian service will be more fully treated. For the present all that need be said is that, being for the most part better linguists, they are generally less exclusive than the officers of the army of occupation. At the same time, the society in which they move is mainly English.

The next point to consider is the attitude of the Europeans resident in Egypt towards the English, and more particularly towards the small band of Englishmen who were instrumental in carrying out the work of Egyptian reform.

Enough has been already said to show that there is little social sympathy between the English, and any class of Europeans in Egypt. The best amongst the Europeans respect the British officials; they admire their good qualities—their honesty, their energy, and above all their tenacity. But few like them. Moreover, few understand them. To the European resident in Egypt the British officials were, in the first instance at all events, somewhat of an enigma. Being generally accustomed to Continental official procedure, they could not understand a member of a bureaucracy who rather despised forms and had no bureaucratic tendencies, and who, moreover, did his work in an unobtrusive way without any unnecessary fuss. But as the occupation was prolonged, and the effects of British predominance became year by year more apparent, the ways of the British official became better understood.

The usurer, the drink-seller, and others of the same species, naturally looked askance at the Englishman and his reforms from the very first. Though these classes recognised that the presence of a British army in Egypt afforded security to their lives and properties, and though they were aware that, in the event of an ebullition of Moslem fanaticism, they would be the first to suffer, still they would not readily forgive the Englishman for standing between them and their prey; they could not forget that, had British influence not been predominant, the rate of interest would have been quadrupled; they, therefore, at one time looked back regretfully to those halcyon days before the British occupation, when they were able to plunder the Egyptian Government at will, and when they and the Egyptian Government agreed together to plunder the Egyptians.

The political sympathies of the various nationalities count also for a good deal in the formation of European public opinion as regards the action of the British officials in Egypt. On these, I need not dwell. Inasmuch as they depend on the occurrence of political events outside Egypt, they naturally varied greatly during the period of my tenure of office.

In this, and in the four preceding chapters, an attempt has been made to describe the principal elements of Egyptian society with special reference to the attitude which each section assumed towards the English reformer, more especially in the early days of the occupation. It is now possible to marshal the opposing forces and to distinguish between friends and foes. Some were avowedly hostile. Some vacillated between lukewarm friendship and covert hostility. Others, constituting a large numerical majority, were friendly, but dared not give expression to their friendship, and were, moreover, powerless to help the cause of their benefactors. Lastly, a small minority were friendly and had the courage of their opinions, but the occasion for asserting them was generally wanting.

The Turco-Egyptian Pashas, the Moslem hierarchy, the Europeanised Egyptians, and the French were, in the first instance, for various reasons hostile.

The squirearchy, the Copts, the Syrians, and the Levantines hovered between friendship and hostility, being torn by conflicting sentiments and driven hither and thither by every passing breeze of self-interest.

The mass of the population, that is to say, the fellaheen, were certainly from the very first friendly, but they were politically speechless, and, moreover, were so credulous and ignorant that, had they attempted to make their voices heard, they would just as likely as not have fallen into the hands of frothy demagogues or unprincipled newspaper editors, who would have made them say the opposite of what they really thought.

A small body of respectable and intelligent Europeans were friendly, but their friendship was platonic. They took little part in local politics, and were, for the most part, mere spectators of what was passing on the political stage.

It will be seen that the hostile, quasi-hostile and apathetic forces, though less numerous, were more powerful than those who were friendly. On the one side, stood the stolid conservatism of the East, religious prejudice, ignorance, international jealousy, and a number of powerful vested interests, some of an ignoble type. On the other side, stood the force derived from an honest endeavour to secure the well-being of a whole population, which had been trodden under foot for centuries.

The battle seemed in some respects unequal. Yet the Englishman took heart of grace. He proceeded with caution and he won the day.

He felt from the first that he was fighting in a good cause. He had the goodwill of intelligent and impartial Europe. He had a military force behind him to prevent any premature upset of the whole machine. He was able to employ agents of experience trained in all the intricacies of Oriental government. Ten years after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir a competent observer was able to write: "Even our superb administration of India is hardly a brighter jewel in our imperial crown than the marvellous regeneration of Egypt."[1] More than this. As the occupation continued, a great change came over the opinions of various sections of Egyptian society. The benefits conferred by the exercise of British influence were, indeed, so palpable that they could not be denied. Amongst both European and Egyptian society, all but a very small class ranged themselves, either actively or passively, on the side of England.[2] Notably, both Italian and Greek sympathy was on many occasions displayed in a very remarkable degree. The representatives of the various Christian communities resident in Egypt seized every possible opportunity for expressing their friendliness to England. With a few exceptions, even the Moslems acquiesced in the policy of reform.

The open or covert hostility of various sections of society in Egypt has not been the only, neither, indeed, has it been the principal difficulty which has beset the path of the English reformer. Under the combined influences of rival diplomatists, bondholders, foreign jurists, and others, who have from time to time borne a part in Egyptian affairs, a variety of fantastic institutions grew up, many of which were originally devised to check misgovernment, but which, under altered circumstances, have, as a matter of fact, acted as powerful obstacles to reform. An endeavour will now be made to guide the reader through some of the intricate windings of this administrative labyrinth.

---

[1] *Cairo*, p. 243.

[2] I wrote these remarks in 1903, and, in spite of any appearances to the contrary, my conviction is that they still (1907) hold good. During the last three or four years, a strong and very legitimate desire to take a greater part than heretofore in the administration of the country has made itself felt among intelligent Egyptians, but my belief is that the number of those who would really wish the reforming work of England in Egypt to be brought prematurely to a close still comprise a "very small," and, I may add, a wholly unrepresentative, class.

# CHAPTER XXXIX

## THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

Nature of the machinery—Parts of the machine—1. THE SULTAN—The Firman of 1892—The Sinai Peninsula—2. THE KHEDIVE—Rescript of August 28, 1878—Constitutionalism of Tewfik Pasha—3. THE MINISTERS—The Departments—Position of an Egyptian Minister—4. THE ORGANIC LAW of May 1, 1883—The Provincial Councils—The Legislative Council—The Legislative Assembly.

IF any one unacquainted with mechanics enters a factory where a quantity of steam machinery is at work, he is for a moment deafened with the noise, and his first impression will not improbably be one of surprise that any delicate bit of workmanship can result from the apparent confusion which he sees before him. Gradually, however, he comes to understand that the rate at which each wheel turns is regulated to a nicety, that the piston of the steam-engine cannot give a stroke by one hair's-breadth shorter or longer than that which it is intended to give, that the strength with which the hammer is made to descend is capable of the most perfect adjustment, that safety-valves and a variety of other checks and counterchecks exist which are sufficient guarantees against accident, and that, generally, each portion of the machinery is adapted to perform a certain specified bit of work and is under such perfect control that it cannot interfere with the functions of any other portion. He will then no longer be surprised that, with a little care in oiling the different parts of the machinery, a highly finished piece of workmanship is eventually produced.

If, on the other hand, he finds on examination that the confusion is even worse than at first sight appeared, that the movement of each wheel is eccentric in the highest degree, that the piston is liable at any moment to stop working, that there is no adequate machinery for adjusting the strength of the stroke to be given by the hammer, that safety-valves and other guarantees against accident are wanting, that the work to be performed by each separate portion is uncertain and variable, that some portions are of the latest and most improved patterns whilst others are old, rusty, and obsolete, that a strong centrifugal force is constantly at work impelling the different parts of the machinery to fly out of their own orbits, and that a mistake on the part of the engineer in not removing any small particle of grit betimes, or not applying the right amount of oil at the right moment, may bring about a collapse of the whole fabric,—he will then no longer look for the production of any highly finished article. Indeed, he will be surprised that the mechanical chaos before him is capable of producing any article at all.

The Egyptian administrative system bears to the administration of any highly civilised European State much the same relation as the second factory described above bears to the first. In Europe, we know what a despotism means, and we know what constitutional government means. The words absolute monarchy, limited monarchy, republic, parliamentary government, federal council, and others of a like nature, when applied to the government of any country, will readily convey to an educated European a general idea of how the government of the particular country in question is conducted. But the political dictionary may be ransacked in vain for any terse description of the Government of Egypt.

In the first place, that Government is, in reality, not a Government at all. Nubar Pasha frequently said: "Ce n'est pas un Gouvernement; c'est une administration." This is quite true. The Khedive is deprived by the Egyptian constitutional charter of all rights of external sovereignty, neither does he possess to the full those rights of internal sovereignty which are inherent in the rulers of all independent, and even of some semi-independent states.

In the second place, the manner in which the legislative power is exercised in the Ottoman dominions, of which Egypt forms a part, is unique. We readily understand what a Ukase issued by the Czar of Russia means. An intelligent foreigner will at once seize on what is meant when it is said that the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has given his assent to a Bill which has passed through both Houses of Parliament. But the Khedive's power is dissimilar to that of either a despotic or a constitutional ruler. He cannot, on his own authority, issue any Decree the provisions of which will be binding on all the inhabitants of Egypt. Legislation has to be conducted by diplomacy. The President of the United States and the King of Sweden have to give their consent before the provisions of any new law can be applied to the subjects of the Emperor of Austria or the King of the Belgians, for in legislation by diplomacy unanimity amongst the diplomatic legislators is required; otherwise no legislation can take place. The system, as Lord Salisbury once wrote to me, "is like the *liberum veto* of the Polish Diet, without the resource of cutting off the dissentient's head."

In the third place, the executive power is so disseminated as to render it impossible to say where it resides. In certain matters, the Khedive and his Ministers are practically vested with despotic power. In others, their hands are tied to a greater extent than those of the Governors of the most democratic States. Moreover, it often happens that, although the text of the document which confers some special power may be clear, it will be found, on closer inspection, that some international or other ligament exists, which is apparently so flimsy as to be only visible to the eye of a trained diplomatist, but which is in reality of so tough a texture as to place an effectual obstacle in the way of the practical exercise of the power.

In the fourth place, the judicial system is a tangle of conflicting jurisdictions. The law is at times applied by a body of foreign judges who, being free from the restraints of any legislature, are practically a law unto themselves. At times, again, the law is administered by Egyptian judges. Each Consul judges his own countrymen for criminal offences according to the laws of his own country, whilst close by the Kadi is endeavouring to settle some dispute over a will according to the rusty principles laid down thirteen centuries ago by Mohammed.

The complicated machinery, whose general nature is described above, will now be explained in detail. It will be as well, in the first instance, to enumerate the parts of the machine. They are as follows:—

1. The Sultan. 2. The Khedive. 3. The Ministers. 4. The Legislative Council and Assembly. 5. The superior European officials, mostly British, who are attached in various capacities to the different Ministries.

The above constitute the Turkish, Egyptian, and

Anglo-Egyptian, as opposed to the International portions of the administration. The International, or, as they are usually called, the Mixed Administrations were created in virtue of arrangements made, from time to time, between the Egyptian Government and the Powers. Neither their functions nor their constitution can be changed without the assent of the Powers. In 1882, when the British occupation commenced, they were as follows:—1. The Commission of the Public Debt. 2. The Railway Board, under which was also placed the administration of the Telegraph Department and of the Port of Alexandria. 3. The Daira Administration. 4. The Domains Administration.

Lastly, justice is administered by the following law-courts:—1. The Mixed Tribunals. 2. The Native Tribunals. 3. The Consular Courts. 4. The Mehkemeh Sheraieh.

### 1. *The Sultan.*

The relations between the Sultan and the Khedive are laid down in a variety of Firmans dating from 1841 to 1892. Of these, the most recent is naturally the most important. It was issued to Abbas II. on March 27, 1892. Save in respect to one point, to which allusion will presently be made, this Firman does not differ from that of August 7, 1879, granted to Tewfik Pasha.

The main provision of the Firman of 1892 is that under certain restrictions, the civil and financial administration of Egypt is confided to the Khedive Abbas II. and his male descendants taken in order of primogeniture. The restrictions are as follows:—

In the first place, it is laid down that all Egyptians are Ottoman subjects. The taxes are to be levied in the name of the Sultan. There can, therefore, conformably with the Firman, be no such thing as a separate Egyptian State, or a separate Egyptian nationality.

In the second place, it is taken for granted that the Khedive has no right to make political Treaties with foreign states. Conventions dealing with commercial affairs, or with those which relate solely to matters of purely internal administration, may, however, be made. Mr. James Scott, the lecturer at the Khedivial School of Law, says: "In regard to the right of the Egyptian Government to make International Conventions, it would appear that it has power to make Conventions in reference to every question except the cession of territory, or the making of peace or war."[1] As a natural result of this political relationship, the Khedive has no right to appoint a diplomatic representative to any European court. Further, as a general rule, when the European Powers meet in conclave, Egypt is represented by the Ottoman delegate. Separate Egyptian representation has, however, been allowed at Conferences assembled to deal with special subjects, in which Egypt is interested. It is not easy to lay down any very precise rule on this subject. Thus, when, in 1884, a Conference was assembled in London to consider the financial affairs of Egypt, the Egyptian Government were denied any separate representation. Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador in London, sat, and often slept at the Council table,[2] whilst the Egyptian delegates,

---

[1] *The Law affecting Foreigners in Egypt, as the Result of the Capitulations*, p. 145.

[2] I cannot refrain from relating a somewhat amusing incident which happened at this Conference. At that time, all the Powers, except perhaps Italy, were acting in concert against England. England was defending Egyptian interests. Count Münster proposed that the quarantine question, in which Germany at that moment took much interest, should be discussed. Lord Granville pointed out that, if once the Conference went beyond the limits for which it had been assembled, there was no reason why every description of Eastern question should not be brought within its cognisance. Thus, an undesirably wide

Tigrane Pasha and Blum Pasha, occupied a side table, and were not allowed to take any direct part in the discussions. On the other hand, at the Conference, which met at Venice in 1892 to discuss quarantine affairs, the Egyptian Government were accorded the right of separate representation to this extent, that the Egyptian delegates could speak but could not vote. A further step in advance was made at the Sanitary Conference held at Paris in 1904. The Egyptian delegates were accorded the right of voting in Committee, but not at the plenary sittings of the Commission.

In the third place, the Khedive cannot abandon to a third party any of the territorial rights of the Sultan. In respect of this matter, theory and fact came into collision when the Italians occupied Massowah.

In the fourth place, traditional Turkish jealousy of Egypt is shown by the provision that the Egyptian army cannot, under ordinary circumstances, exceed 18,000 men. If, however, Turkey is at war, the Egyptian army may be called upon to fight in the cause of the Sultan, in which case it may be increased according to the requirements of the moment. Following on the same order of

---

field would be opened up for discussion. The French and Russian representatives pointed out that no danger of this sort was to be feared, for that no one wished to raise any other question save that of quarantine. The question was put to the vote, which proceeded on what may be termed strictly party lines, until it came to the turn of Musurus Pasha. A true emblem of the country which he represented, Musurus Pasha was fast asleep, and had heard nothing of the discussion which led to the vote. He was awakened, and was informed that he had to vote on the question of whether quarantine matters should or should not be brought before the Conference. He was at the time acting in general concert with the anti-English party, but, as he had not been told beforehand what he had to do, he gave utterance to a perfectly independent opinion. "Parfaitement," he said, "je suis de cet avis ; mais alors j'ai beaucoup d'autres questions que je voudrais porter à la connaissance de la Conférence." Lord Granville had found an unconscious and involuntary ally. He carried his point. Quarantine affairs were not discussed.

ideas, it is provided that the Khedive cannot construct any ironclads (*bâtiments blindés*) without the authority of the Sultan. The Turkish flag is to be the Egyptian flag. The distinctive marks of military rank are to be identic in the two armies. The Khedive may grant the rank of Colonel to military, and that of Sanieh (second-class Bey) to civil officials, but he may not confer any higher titles.

In the fifth place, the coinage of Egypt is to be issued in the name of the Sultan.

In return for concessions made at various times by the Sultans, Ismail Pasha undertook to pay a Tribute of £682,000 a year to the Porte.[1] The original sum paid in 1841 by Mehemet Ali was £377,000, but under the combined influence of ambitious Khedives and of impecunious Sultans, the figure was nearly doubled at subsequent periods.

It has been already stated that, save in respect to one point, the Firman of 1892 was a reproduction of that of 1879. It will be as well to allude briefly to the exception.

The Firman of 1879 laid down that the Khedivate of Egypt was to be "tel qu'il se trouve formé par ses anciennes limites et en comprenant les territoires qui y ont été annexés." When the Firman of 1892 was in course of preparation, the British Ambassador at Constantinople was assured that it was identic with that of 1879. There was, however, reason to believe that this statement was incorrect. The Porte had always been sensitive as regards European interference in or near the Hedjaz. Indeed, the law allowing foreigners to acquire real property in the Ottoman dominions forbids any European to settle in the Hedjaz.

---

[1] Practically the whole of the Tribute is mortgaged to the Ottoman bondholders.

More than this, the Sultan's suspicions had been aroused by two recent incidents. One was that Turkish misgovernment had produced a revolt in the province of the Yemen, which was, without a shadow of foundation, attributed to British intrigue. The second was that a well-intentioned German enthusiast, named Friedmann, of Jewish origin, was, at the moment when the Firman was under discussion, endeavouring to establish a settlement of some couple of dozen Jews, who had been expelled from Russia, on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Akaba. This was suspicious. Moukhtar Pasha pointed out that the Jews had always been waiting for a Messiah to reconquer Jerusalem, and that, without doubt, they would think he had now appeared in the person of Mr. Friedmann. It was not difficult to convince Moukhtar Pasha that Mr. Friedmann was devoid of any such pretensions.[1] But the suspicions of the Sultan were not so easily calmed. The result was that the Firman laid down the Egyptian frontier as drawn from Suez to El-Arish. The Peninsula of Sinai, which had been administered by the Khedives of Egypt for the last forty years, would thus have reverted to Turkey. It was undesirable to bring Turkish soldiers down to the banks of the Suez Canal. When, therefore, the Firman arrived, the British Government interposed and placed a veto on its promulgation. After a short delay, the Grand Vizier telegraphed to the Khedive accepting a proposal, which had been offered to the Sultan some weeks previously, but which His Imperial Majesty had then refused to entertain.[2] Under this arrangement, the frontier of Egypt was drawn from El-Arish to the head of the Gulf of Akaba. The incident was thus for the time being terminated, and the Firman was promulgated with all customary pomp. Occasion was taken to lay down again the principle that "no alteration could be made in the Firmans regulating the relations between the Sublime Porte and Egypt without the consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government."

---

[1] Mr. Friedmann may be known to some Englishmen as the author of a history of Anne Boleyn.

[2] The settlement of this question was in a great measure due to the skill with which the negotiations at Constantinople were conducted by the late Sir Edmund Fane, who was at the time in charge of the Embassy.

In 1905, another and more determined effort was made by the Sultan to occupy the Sinai Peninsula, but after a brief, and somewhat stormy negotiation, the arrangement made in 1892 was confirmed. Shortly afterwards, the Turco-Egyptian frontier was delimitated by a Joint Commission.

Such, therefore, are the official relations between the Sultan and the Khedive. From the observations which have been made in the course of this narrative, it will have been gathered that the constant endeavour of the Sultan has been to encroach on the rights of the Khedive. On the other hand, the sentiments of the ruling classes in Egypt towards the Sultan may be described as a compound of fear, religious sympathy, and political dislike. Which of these sentiments is predominant depends on the fleeting circumstances of the moment.

### 2. *The Khedive.*

It was explained in the first part of this work how an unwilling recognition of the principle of ministerial responsibility was wrung from Ismail Pasha. Ismail's Rescript of August 28, 1878,[1] was, indeed, violated almost immediately after its issue. Nevertheless, it forms to this day the Magna Charta of Egypt.

Naturally enough, more depends on the spirit in which the Rescript is applied than on the terms of the document itself. By a fortunate accident, Ismail Pasha was succeeded by a Khedive who had a natural turn for constitutionalism. Tewfik Pasha acted up to the spirit of his father's declarations. He asserted his legitimate prerogatives, but he governed "through and with his Council of Ministers." The terms of the Rescript are, however, sufficiently elastic to enable all the most objectionable abuses of personal government to be re-established without any apparent violation of the letter of Ismail Pasha's declaration. So long as the British occupation lasts, a solid guarantee exists that any tendency towards the re-establishment of a bad form of personal government will be checked before disastrous consequences ensue.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, vol. i. p. 62.

### 3. *The Ministers.*

The Egyptian administrative machine is divided into seven Departments, over each of which a Minister presides. These are Foreign Affairs, Finance, Justice, War, Public Works, Education, and the Interior.

The Post Office, the Customs, and the Lighthouses are under the Financial Department. The Sanitary Department and the Prisons are attached to the Interior. The Wakfs (religious endowments) are administered by a Director-General, who in practice takes his orders direct from the Khedive.

The proceedings of the Council are conducted partly in Arabic and partly in French, the latter language being employed to suit the convenience of those European officials who have a right to be present at the meetings of Council, and of Egyptian Ministers[1] who are not acquainted with the Arabic language.

---

[1] *E.g.* Nubar and Tigrane Pashas.

The position of an Egyptian Minister is difficult and delicate. There are usually in his Department one or more high European officials, who are subordinate to him. The ideal state of things would be if the Minister showed no jealousy of his subordinate, worked cordially with him, followed his advice when it was sound, and stated his objections intelligently when he thought it was questionable; and if, on the other hand, the European official was careful never to be aggressive, or to press unduly for the adoption of his views in doubtful cases. It has not always been easy to find Egyptian Ministers who will carry out the first, or Europeans who will carry out the second part of this programme. Nevertheless, the system has on the whole worked smoothly. More especially of late years, the relations between the Egyptian Ministers and their British coadjutors have been most cordial and friendly.

### 4. *The Organic Law of May* 1, 1883.

Briefly stated, the provisions of the Organic Law of May 1, 1883, which was framed under Lord Dufferin's auspices, are as follows:—

A Provincial Council, composed of from eight to three members, according to the size of the province, is established in each Moudirieh. The Moudir is the President. The functions of these Councils are to deal with local matters, such as the alignment of roads and canals, the establishment of markets, etc. The total number of Provincial Councillors is seventy. When we are liberal in Egypt, we do not content ourselves with half-measures. The members of the Council are elected by universal suffrage.

The Legislative Council is composed of thirty members. Of these, fourteen, including the

President, are named by the Egyptian Government. Of the remainder, fourteen are elected by the Provincial Councils from amongst their own members, one is elected by the town of Cairo, and one by Alexandria and some other less important towns. No Law or Decree "portant règlement d'administration publique" can be promulgated without its having been previously submitted to the Council. The Government are not obliged to adopt the views of the Council, but, in the event of their not doing so, the reasons for the rejection must be communicated to the Council. "L'exposition de ces motifs ne peut donner lieu à aucune discussion." The Budget has to be submitted to the Council, who may "émettre des avis et des vœux sur chaque chapitre du Budget." The Government are, however, not obliged to conform to any views which may be expressed by the Council in connection with the Budget, nor may the latter discuss any financial charge incumbent on the Egyptian Treasury, which results from an international arrangement. The Egyptian Ministers may take part in the discussions of the Council, or may cause themselves to be represented by any high functionaries of their respective Departments.

The Legislative Assembly consists of eighty-two members, viz.: The six Ministers, the thirty members of the Legislative Council, and forty-six delegates who are elected by the population. Certain qualifications are necessary in order to become a candidate for election to the Assembly. The candidate must be not less than thirty years old, he must be able to read and write, and he must pay direct taxes to the amount of not less than £E.30 a year. No new direct tax can be imposed without the approval of the Assembly. The Assembly must also be consulted about any public loans, about the construction of canals and railways, and about the classification of lands in connection with the payment of the land-tax. The Assembly may also spontaneously express its views on all economic, administrative, and financial questions. As in the case of the Legislative Council, the Government are not under any obligation to adopt the opinions of the Assembly in such matters, but the reasons for not adopting them must be stated. The Assembly must meet at least once in two years. The public are not admitted to the sittings either of the Council or of the Assembly.

In the last Report I wrote before leaving Egypt[1] I expressed myself favourably to the proposal that reporters should be admitted to the sittings of the Council. If this proposal encounters opposition, it will come, not from any European authority, but from the members of the Council themselves. I have reason to believe that, amongst these, a good deal of difference of opinion exists as to the desirability of effecting this reform.

Besides these institutions, the Organic Law of May 1, 1883, provided for the establishment of a Council of State (Conseil d'État) whose organisation and functions were to be explained in a subsequent Decree. This institution was borrowed from France. Its alleged object was to prepare draft laws for submission to the legislature. When I arrived in Egypt, in September 1883, I found that the formation of the Council of State was a burning question. It very soon became apparent that, under cover of this institution, international government was to be introduced into every branch of the Egyptian administration. The discussion went on for several months until, on January 19, 1884, I informed Lord Granville that the Council of State would be a useless and expensive body. Nubar Pasha was of the same opinion. Egypt was thus mercifully saved from this particular form of international plague.

---

[1] *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, p. 29.

Such, therefore, are the constitution and functions of the Egyptian Houses of Parliament. Lord Dufferin's law was conceived in a liberal and statesmanlike spirit. The leading idea was to give the Egyptian people an opportunity of making their voices heard, but at the same time not to bind the executive Government by parliamentary fetters, which would have been out of place in a country whose political education was so little advanced as that of Egypt.

The question of the extension of representative institutions in Egypt has recently formed the subject of much public discussion. I do not propose to deal with this question at any length. The main object of this work, which will, I fear, extend to greater length than I originally intended, is to narrate the history of the past, rather than to discuss questions which now occupy the attention of the public, and of the responsible Egyptian authorities. Moreover, my views on this particular issue have already been fully and publicly expressed.[1] My remarks will, therefore, be very brief.

In the first place, I wish to say that Lord Dufferin was under no delusion as to the time which would elapse, and as to the difficulties which would have to be encountered before free institutions could take root in the somewhat uncongenial soil of Egypt. All he hoped to do was "to erect some sort of barrier, however feeble, against the intolerable tyranny of the Turks." He hoped that, "under British superintendence," the legislative bodies which he created "might be fostered, and educated into fairly useful institutions, proving a convenient channel through which the European element in the Government might obtain an insight into the inner mind and the less obvious wants of the native population."[1] There cannot be a shadow of doubt that, far from considering that progress had been objectionably slow, Lord Dufferin was not merely gratified, but also somewhat astonished at the extent to which, up to the time of his death, the services of the institutions, of which he was the creator, had been utilised.

---

[1] *Vide, inter alia, Egypt,* No. 1 of 1906, pp. 11-13; *Egypt,* No. 1 of 1907, pp. 3-8, 26-32, and 56; and *Egypt,* No. 3 of 1907.

Next, I have to observe that, if anything is to be done in the direction of a further development of the institutions created in 1883, by far the wisest course will be to begin at the bottom of the legislative ladder. "It is certain," Lord Dufferin very truly said in his Report, "that local self-government is the fittest preparation and most convenient stepping-stone for anything approaching to a constitutional régime." During the last twenty-four years, a good deal more has been done in the way of developing local self-government than many of those who write on Egyptian affairs seem to be aware of.[2]

In many of the most important provincial towns, Mixed Municipalities — that is to say, municipal bodies of which some of the members are European and others are Egyptian — have been established. The difficulty of extending the system lies in the fact that whilst, on the one hand, no very great or rapid progress can be made unless the Municipal Commissioners are invested with certain powers of local taxation, on the other hand, no local taxes can be imposed on Europeans without the consent of the Powers. Hence, until the régime of the

---

[1] These passages are quoted from a letter addressed to me by Lord Dufferin. It is given in Sir Alfred Lyall's *Life of the Marquis of Dufferin*, vol. ii. p. 260.

[2] This branch of the subject is more fully treated in my Report for the year 1906. See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, pp. 29-32.

Capitulations is modified, it will not be possible to create Mixed Municipalities in any towns unless the whole of the population are willing to submit to a system of voluntary taxation.

In a large number of other towns, Local Commissions have been appointed who administer the funds placed at their disposal by the Egyptian Government.

It is, I think, in the direction of increasing the numbers and extending the powers of the Municipalities and Local Commissions that the principal development of local self-government is, in the near future, to be anticipated. Care, however, will have to be taken in dealing with this matter. One of the greatest errors into which Europeans employed in the East are liable to fall is to imagine that Orientals are as much impressed as they are themselves with the necessity of speedily providing roads, drains, lighting, and all the other paraphernalia of civilisation. The present race of Egyptians are, indeed, willing enough to profit by all these things, if they are provided for them from the proceeds of general taxation, but the crucial question is whether they are themselves willing to pay additional taxes in order to attain these objects. They have not, up to the present time, shown much disposition to do so. It will be wise, therefore, not to force the pace. It should always be remembered that what the mass of the population in a backward Eastern country care for above almost all things is that taxation should be light,

As regards the Provincial Councils, a detail which slipped into the Organic Law of 1883—very possibly without its effect being fully realised—has done a good deal to impair their utility. It was laid down that no Provincial Council could meet without being convoked by the Moudir, and that the latter could not convoke the Council without the issue of a Khedivial Decree, laying down both the time and duration of the meeting. The practical result of this arrangement has been that the Councils have never met more than once a year. The time has certainly come when the whole of this question may usefully be considered. One of the last proposals I made before leaving Egypt[1] was that the Provincial Councils should be reorganised, their powers somewhat increased, and that steps should be taken to carry out more fully what was unquestionably Lord Dufferin's intention, viz. that the Councils should be real working bodies, acting as advisers to the Moudir. Sir Eldon Gorst has this matter in hand, and will, I do not doubt, with the help of the British and Egyptian officials, be able to devise a scheme suitable to the requirements and present condition of the country.

The question of whether the powers and constitution of the Legislative Council may advantageously be changed is one of far greater difficulty. As I have already said, I do not propose to discuss it at length. I will, therefore, only say that whilst I am not prepared to maintain that some cautious steps in this direction might not before long be prudently taken, I am very strongly of opinion that any attempt to confer full parliamentary powers on the Council would, for a long time to come, be the extreme of folly and would be highly detrimental to the true interests of the Egyptians themselves. The facts that many of the members of the Council are men of unquestionable honesty and intelligence, and that some are personal friends of my own, cannot blind me to the fact that, as a whole, the Council,—as would, indeed, be the case with any similar body which could, under present circumstances, be constituted in Egypt,—possesses two great defects.

---

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, pp. 29-32.

The first is one which they share with representative bodies in some other countries. It is that, acting under public pressure, they are too apt to propose important changes in the fiscal system, and, at the same time, to advocate large additional expenditure on public objects, without sufficient consideration of the financial results which would ensue were effect given to their proposals. It should never be forgotten that any extension of representative institutions, which was obtained at the risk of again plunging Egypt into all the financial embarrassment from which the country has been so hardly and so recently rescued, would be far too dearly bought.

The second defect, which in the eyes of any one acquainted with the past history of modern Egypt is extremely pardonable, is that the most enlightened members of the Council have not, as yet, acquired all those qualities necessary to give them the moral courage to assert their true opinions fearlessly. Notably, many of them are terrorised by the local press. To the European mind, it may seem a contradiction in terms to say that freedom of speech is checked by the freedom of the press. But in the Land of Paradox all things are possible. I have no doubt whatever that a large number—probably a majority — of the members of the Legislative Council would welcome the enactment of a rigorous press law as a measure calculated to free them from the moral shackles which now hamper their liberty of speech and action.

Of all the institutions created by Lord Dufferin, the Legislative Assembly has, in practice, turned out to be the least useful and efficient. It was, and still is, too much in advance of the requirements and political education of the country. No real harm would be done if it were simply abolished, and, indeed, the cause of representative government would, I believe, benefit if, simultaneously with its abolition, the Legislative Council were reorganised, and its powers somewhat increased. Without doubt, however, the adoption of this course would be regarded by many—erroneously, in my opinion—as a retrograde measure. It may, therefore, be politically desirable not to entertain the idea. In that case, I hold that, for the time being, the Legislative Assembly should be left alone. I deprecate any attempt to enlarge its powers, and I think it would be extremely difficult to amend its constitution.

The purely Egyptian portion of the machinery of government has now been described. This part of the machinery would, however, never get into motion were it not impelled by some strong motive power. That motive power is furnished by the British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government. The special functions of these officials will be described in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER XL

## THE BRITISH OFFICIALS

Qualifications required of an Anglo-Egyptian official—Positions of the civil and military officials—The French in Tunis—The Financial Adviser—Sir Edgar Vincent—The Judicial Adviser—History of his appointment—Sir Raymond West—Justice under Egyptian management—Sir John Scott—The Public Works Department—Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff—Sir William Garstin—The Financial Secretary — Blum Pasha — Lord Milner—Sir Eldon Gorst — Sub-Departments of Finance—The Interior—Public Instruction—European and Egyptian officials.

It is related that a lady once asked Madame de Staël to recommend a tutor for her boy. She described the sort of man she wished to find. He was to be a gentleman with perfect manners and a thorough knowledge of the world ; it was essential that he should be a classical scholar and an accomplished linguist ; he was to exercise supreme authority over his pupil, and at the same time he was to show such a degree of tact that his authority was to be unfelt ; in fact, he was to possess almost every moral attribute and intellectual faculty which it is possible to depict, and, lastly, he was to place all these qualities at the service of Madame de Staël's friend for a very low salary. The witty Frenchwoman listened with attention to her friend's list of indispensable qualifications and eventually replied : " Ma chère, je comprends parfaitement bien le caractère de l'homme qu'il vous faut, mais je dois vous dire que si je le trouve, je l'épouse."

This story is applicable to the qualifications demanded of an ideal Anglo-Egyptian official.

The Anglo-Egyptian official must possess some technical knowledge, such as that of the engineer, the accountant, or the lawyer; otherwise, he will be unable to deal with the affairs of the Department to which he is attached. At the outset of his career, he is usually placed at a great disadvantage. He must often explain his ideas in a foreign language, French, with which he has probably only a limited acquaintance. Unless he is to run the risk of falling into the hands of some subordinate, often of doubtful trustworthiness, it is, at all events in respect to many official posts, essential that he should acquire some knowledge of a very difficult Oriental language, Arabic. These, however, are all faculties to which it is possible to apply some fairly accurate test. The Anglo-Egyptian official must be possessed of other qualities, which it is more difficult to gauge with precision, but which are in reality of even greater importance than those to which allusion is made above. He must be a man of high character. He must have sufficient elasticity of mind to be able to apply, under circumstances which are strange to him, the knowledge which he has acquired elsewhere. He must be possessed of a sound judgment in order to enable him to distinguish between abuses, which should be at once reformed, and those which it will be wise to tolerate, at all events for a time. He must be versatile, and quick to adapt any local feature of the administration to suit his own reforming purposes. He must be well-mannered and conciliatory, and yet not allow his conciliation to degenerate into weakness. He must be firm, and yet not allow his firmness to harden into dictation. He must efface himself as much as possible. In fact, besides his special technical knowledge, he must possess all the qualities which we look for in a trained diplomatist, a good administrator, and an experienced man of the world.

It is not easy in any country to produce a number of officials, who have undergone a departmental training, and who at the same time possess all these qualities. It is especially difficult, when they are found, to attract them to Egypt on salaries of £2000 a year and less. The efficient working of the administrative machine depends, however, mainly on choosing the right man for the right place. What often happens when any place has to be filled is this,—on the one hand, are a number of candidates who wish to occupy the post, but who do not possess the qualifications necessary to fill it with advantage to the public interests; on the other hand, are a very small number of persons, who possess the necessary qualifications, but who, for one reason or another, are reluctant to accept the appointment. Under these circumstances, it is a matter for congratulation that administrative successes have been the rule, whilst the failures have been the exceptions.

Looking to the anomalous positions occupied by the Anglo-Egyptian officials, it is, indeed, greatly to their credit that, as a body, they should have succeeded in performing the several tasks allotted to them. Without doubt, they have had diplomatic support behind them. Moreover, and this is perhaps more important than the support itself, it has been felt by all concerned that the possibility of stronger support than that which was actually afforded lay in the background. Nevertheless, the British officials in Egypt have had to rely mainly on their individual judgment and force of character. The British Consul-General can occasionally give advice. He may, when speaking to the British official, temper the zeal of the latter for reform, or, when talking to the Egyptian Minister, advocate the views of the reformer. But he cannot step seriously upon the scene unless there is some knot to be untied which is worthy of a serious effort. He cannot at every moment interfere in matters of departmental detail. The work done by the Anglo-Egyptian official is, therefore, mainly the outcome of his own resource and of his own versatility. If he is adroit, he can make the fact that the soldiers of his nation are in occupation of the country felt without flaunting their presence in any brusque fashion before the eyes of his Egyptian superior. As a matter of fact, the most successful Anglo-Egyptian officials have been those who have relied most on their own powers of persuasion, and have rarely applied for diplomatic support.

In describing more particularly the position of the Anglo-Egyptian officials, a distinction must be drawn between civilians and soldiers. The British officers of the Egyptian army have had to contend against considerable difficulties, but, as compared with their civilian colleagues, they have from one important point of view been at an advantage. There is a reality about the position of the soldier which does not exist in the case of the civilian. The Egyptian Commander-in-Chief, or, to call him by his Egyptian title, the Sirdar, not only commands the army. It is recognised by the Egyptian Government and by the public that he commands it. There is thus no flagrant contradiction between his real and his nominal position. Most of the superior officers of the army, whether departmental or regimental, are British. The Sirdar is, therefore, master of the situation. He can decide on what orders to give, and he can rely on his orders being obeyed, not only in the letter but in the spirit. He is not obliged to trim his sails to every passing political breeze.

Far other is the position of the Anglo-Egyptian civilian. Some of the most important civil functionaries possess no executive functions. They can only advise. No special system exists to enforce the acceptance of their advice. All that can be said is that, in the event of their advice being systematically rejected, the British Government will be displeased, and that they will probably find some adequate means for making their displeasure felt. Further, of those Anglo-Egyptian civil officials who possess executive power, few can be certain that their power is effective; they cannot rely confidently on their subordinates, who are rarely British, to carry out the letter, and still less the spirit of their instructions. The Anglo-Egyptian official is also driven by the necessities of his position into being an opportunist. The least part of his difficulties lies in deciding what should be done. That is usually easy. When once he clearly sees before him the action which ought to be taken, he has to decide the more difficult questions of when to act and how to conduct himself in order to get others to act with him. And, in deciding on these latter points, he often has to take into consideration matters which at first sight appear to be not even remotely connected with the immediate subject under discussion. Every Anglo-Egyptian civil official, therefore, has not only to be guided by the general impulse given by British diplomacy to Egyptian affairs, but he also has to do a good deal of diplomatic work on his own account.

Comparisons have been occasionally instituted between the position of the English in Egypt and that of the French in Tunis. In 1890, a report on Tunisian affairs was prepared by M. Ribot. A glance at this report is sufficient to show that, for all practical purposes, the French Government have annexed Tunis. Scarcely a semblance of native authority remains. The French officials have a free hand in dealing with the administration of the country. The French Resident-General presides at the Council of Ministers and directs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. No law is valid which has not been countersigned by him. The Ministry of War is in the hands of the General in command of the French army of occupation. All the important offices of the State are held by Frenchmen. A French Secretary-General receives all the letters addressed to the Tunisian Government and prepares the answers. "Ainsi," it is said, "aucune affaire ne peut échapper à sa surveillance, et dans toutes, il peut donner ses conseils et faire prévaloir la pensée du Protectorat." By the side of each of the "Câïds," who answer to the Egyptian Moudirs, is placed a French Controller who, amongst other functions, has the Police under his command.

M. Ribot concluded his account of the system of administration in the following terms: "Il fallait ensuite qu'aucun détail dans l'application de ces décisions ne pût nous échapper. Aucun document n'entre dans les bureaux de l'Administration centrale ou n'en sort, aucune lettre n'est présentée à la signature du Premier Ministre, aucune correspondance n'est envoyée aux destinataires sans passer par l'intermédiaire du Secrétaire général et être soumis à son examen. Tout ce qui arrive aux Câïds ou émane d'eux est de la même manière soumis à l'examen des Contrôleurs civils. Rien ne peut donc se faire dans la Régence qui ne soit approuvé par nous." This is sufficiently explicit. In point of fact, Tunis is just as much a part of France as the Department of the Seine. A qualified Tunisian has explained the position of the Bey of Tunis in the following terms: "Les attributions du Bey de Tunis se réduisent seule-

ment à la nomination de quelques employés subalternes et même ces nominations sont soumises à l'approbation du Ministre Résident de France, ou de son premier secrétaire, qui est en même temps Secrétaire-Général du Gouvernement Tunisien."

More than this, the attitude of the other Powers, and notably of England, towards the French administration of Tunis has been persistently friendly. The British Government speedily abandoned the Capitulations at the instance of France, an example which was followed by Italy and other Powers.[1]

It is, therefore, clear that no analogy exists between the conditions under which France took in hand the Tunisian problem and those which obtained, and still obtain, in respect to the Anglo-Egyptian administration of Egypt.

The most important British official in Egypt is the Financial Adviser. After the Arábi revolt, the question of how to place the financial administration of Egypt under European control had to be reconsidered. It was decided to appoint a British official with the title of Financial Adviser. He was to have no executive functions, but he was to be present at the meetings of the Council of Ministers. No attempt has ever been made to define his duties in any very precise manner. Broadly speaking, however, it may be said that, as his official title implies, he has to advise on all important financial matters, without unduly encroaching on the prerogatives of the Finance Minister. Outside his special duties, his position is also of importance. As he is present at all the meetings of the Council, he has the best opportunities for knowing what is going on in Egyptian ministerial circles. He can often guide the Ministers on matters which are unconnected with finance. He can keep the British Consul-General well informed. Being an Egyptian official, he can often give advice on his own behalf in a form which is more palatable than if it were tendered with all the weight of the British diplomatic representative speaking on behalf of his Government.

---

[1] The friendly attitude of England and Germany towards France in Tunis has been recognised in a work entitled *La Politique Française en Tunisie* (p. 374), which, though published anonymously, was, it is well known, written by a member of the French diplomatic corps.

Sir Auckland Colvin was the first Financial Adviser. In the autumn of 1883, he was succeeded by Sir Edgar Vincent. At the time, some doubts were expressed as to whether Sir Edgar Vincent was not too young for the post. These doubts were soon removed. A more fortunate selection could not have been made. Sir Edgar Vincent possessed in a high degree the quality specially necessary for the performance of his duties. He was eminently resourceful; he never despaired during the blackest period of the Egyptian financial chaos. He was sanguine of ultimate success, and as at every turn new and unexpected difficulties had to be encountered, he was always ready with some ingenious device to stave off the evil day of bankruptcy, and thus to gain breathing time during which the financial ship would, at all events, have a chance of righting herself. He stayed long enough to see that his labours had not been in vain. The rehabilitation of Egyptian finance is in a large degree the work of Sir Edgar Vincent. After his departure in October 1889, he was succeeded by Sir Elwin Palmer, who again was succeeded in 1898 by Mr. (afterwards Sir Eldon) Gorst. In 1904, Sir Eldon Gorst's place was taken by Sir Vincent Corbett. On the latter's resignation in 1907, he was succeeded by Mr. Harvey.

I now turn to the Judicial Department. When I arrived in Egypt, in September 1883, I found that Native Tribunals, based on a French model, were about to be established, and that Sir Benson Maxwell had been appointed to the post of Procureur-Général. He did not remain long. Mr. (afterwards Sir) Raymond West, an Indian judge of distinction, was named to succeed him. He was a man of great learning and capacity. No one could be better qualified to devise a sound judicial system for Egypt. For several months, he studied his subject, and then produced a voluminous report. It contained many valuable suggestions, some of which were, after a considerable lapse of time, carried into execution. Nubar Pasha, who was at the time in office, did not, however, concur in Mr. West's views. The result was that the latter returned to India.

This happened in 1885, that is to say, at the most involved period of Egyptian history since the British occupation. It was necessary to throw overboard a certain amount of cargo in order to lighten the political ship. Nubar Pasha enjoyed a reputation as a judicial reformer. There was much to be said in favour of leaving the Department of Justice in Egyptian hands. It was resolved, therefore, not to press for any British successor to Mr. West, but to see what the Egyptians could do in the way of judicial reform if left to themselves.

The experiment had a fair trial, and proved a complete failure. For the next five years, constant complaints were made as regards the administration of justice, but it was desirable to give public opinion time to mature before taking any definite action in the matter. In the meanwhile, Nubar Pasha, fearful of English interference, named a Belgian, M. Le Grelle, to be Procureur-Général.[1] M. Le Grelle brought to light the existence of some serious abuses. Notably, he discovered that for several years past the ordinary Tribunals had not been dealing with the most important cases of crime which occurred in the country. They had been practically superseded by certain "Commissions of Brigandage," which were in reality Courts-Martial sitting under the presidency of the Moudirs. Under the auspices of these Commissions, every species of abomination had been committed. Witnesses had been tortured. Some 700 or 800 people had been condemned to imprisonment, and a certain number had been hung. In many cases, the evidence was wholly insufficient to justify a conviction; it cannot be doubted that a good many innocent persons were punished. After a good deal of rather acrimonious discussion, the Commissions of Brigandage were abolished. The evidence in the most doubtful cases was re-examined; some of the prisoners were released, either at once or subsequently.[1]

---

[1] M. Le Grelle resigned his appointment in 1895, and was succeeded by an Egyptian. In 1897, an Englishman (Mr. Corbet) was appointed to the place.

---

[1] Mr. Morice, an English official attached to the Department of Justice, who was subsequently deputed to inquire into the cases of these prisoners, reported as follows:—"I may here state that in the 126 cases examined, I have never once come across any witnesses for the defence; it would, therefore, seem to have been generally decided that this was not of any importance; individuals once arrested and brought before the Commission seem to have had very little chance of regaining their liberty. I was so struck by the total absence of any defence being set up by the accused, apart from a denial of the charge, that I closely questioned those men in whose cases, after a careful examination of the documents, I had formed a conviction that they had been most unjustly sentenced, and I was invariably informed that although they, at the time of their trial, stated that they could produce witnesses to prove their innocence, their demands were never listened to, but they were informed that one thief's word was as good as another's, and that witnesses produced would be treated as accomplices, etc. Indeed, it was sufficient for one man, whose guilt was fully established, either by recognition on the part of the victim of the assault or robbery, or by the finding of stolen property in his possession, to accuse another, for this latter to be sentenced to a very severe term of imprisonment. I have been told the most pitiful stories by convicts I have interrogated concerning the horrible treatment they received when in prison, a treatment which, it is needless to say, invariably ended in a confession being obtained. One has only to examine the preliminary inquiries in order to be convinced of this."

This episode is very Egyptian, and is illustrative of the extent to which an Egyptian Minister often cares more for theory than for practice. An elaborate system of justice existed in appearance. In reality, the system was inoperative. Persons accused of crime were condemned to death or to lifelong imprisonment at the will of some ignorant and tyrannical Moudir.

With the suppression of the Commissions of Brigandage, crime of a serious nature increased. This had been anticipated. It became daily more and more clear that no Egyptian Minister was capable of coping with the situation. The Egyptian Government, therefore, reluctantly consented to appoint an Englishman to the post of Judicial Adviser. It was not easy to find a competent man, for few English lawyers have made a study of the French legal system. A fortunate selection was, however, made in the person of Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Scott. His appointment created a flutter in the Egyptian political dovecot. Riaz Pasha shortly afterwards resigned, and his resignation was in some measure due to his dislike to Sir John Scott's nomination. The establishment of a sound judicial system in Egypt may be said to date from the time of Sir John Scott's assumption of the office of Judicial Adviser. In 1898, Sir John Scott resigned his place to take up an appointment in London. He was succeeded by Sir Malcolm McIlwraith.

Previous to the British occupation, the Public Works Department had been mainly in French hands. In 1883, it was resolved to appoint a British Under-Secretary to this Department, and to bring a staff of British officials from India to superintend the improvements in the canalisation of the country. Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff was named Under-Secretary. The selection was a most happy one. Apart from his very remarkable technical attainments, Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff was a man of the highest character. The most prejudiced Pasha respected qualities which were so dissimilar to any which he himself possessed. The most venomous journalist paused before he threw his political vitriol over a character so transparently honest. No Englishman employed in the Egyptian service during the early days of the occupation did more to make the name of England respected than Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, who, by the way, is not an Englishman, but one of that race which so frequently succeeds in foreign parts by virtue of its sterling good qualities. Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff comes from well north of the Tweed.

In 1892, Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff found a very worthy successor in the person of Sir William Garstin, under whose intelligent auspices very large sums of money were, to the great advantage of the country, spent on public works of various descriptions. It would be difficult to exaggerate the debt of gratitude which the people of Egypt owe to Sir William Garstin.

The Financial Secretary also occupies a post of great importance. He is an executive officer. He performs the duties of the Financial Adviser when the latter is absent. During the early days of the occupation this post was held by Blum Pasha, a very intelligent Austrian, who had the rare merit of having served the Egyptian Government during the lax and corrupt rule of Ismail Pasha without the most censorious critic being able to whisper a word against his honesty. He was a most capable official and worked cordially with the English. On his retirement in 1889, he was succeeded by Mr. (now Lord) Milner, the well-known author of *England in Egypt*. Of Lord Milner all that need be said in this place is that he is one of the most able Englishmen who have served the Egyptian Government. Not only was he versed in all the technicalities of his own Department, but he had a wide grasp of the larger aspects of Egyptian affairs. On his being named, in 1892, to an appointment in England, he was succeeded by Sir Eldon Gorst, who belonged to the diplomatic service. Sir Eldon Gorst had occupied his leisure time in acquiring a knowledge of Arabic. Being endowed with a singular degree of tact and intelligence, he generally managed to get all he wanted done without applying for diplomatic support. Since 1894, when Sir Eldon Gorst was appointed Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, the post of Financial Secretary has changed hands more than once, but it has always been held by a very carefully selected British official.

There are three sub-departments attached to the Ministry of Finance. These are the Customs, the Lighthouses, and the Post Office. The first two of these are under superior British supervision. The Post Office was reorganised by an English Director-General, who was eventually succeeded by an extremely competent Syrian, Saba Pasha, under whose direction various postal reforms of great importance and utility have been introduced.

Until 1894, the Police was commanded by an English Inspector-General who had a small staff of British officers under him. In the autumn of 1894, a change of system was effected. The post of Inspector-General was abolished and an Adviser (Sir Eldon Gorst) was appointed to the Ministry of the Interior. In 1898, Mr. Machell was appointed to succeed Sir Eldon Gorst. The duties attached to the post of Adviser underwent, at the same time, some modifications of no great importance. The head of the Sanitary Department is English, as is also the Director-General of Prisons.

The supreme direction of the Educational Department has always been in Egyptian hands, but, in 1906, an English Adviser (Mr. Dunlop) was appointed to this Department. A considerable number of Europeans are employed as schoolmasters.[1]

Allusion has so far only been made to the highest appointments. It will, however, be as well to speak briefly of the total number of Englishmen employed in Egypt. The subject is one of importance, for it has at times given rise to much exaggeration, and, moreover, the employment of Europeans is naturally viewed with jealousy by those Egyptians who are aspirants for official positions.

It is generally recognised that European assistance, to a certain extent, is necessary to carry on the work of government in Egypt. Differences of opinion, however, arise when any attempt is made to lay down with any degree of precision the extent to which recourse should be had to European agency. Weighty arguments may be advanced on both sides. On the one hand, it is frequently urged that the efficiency of the service suffers by reason of the inadequacy of the European staff; that the welfare of the mass of the population must be placed before all other considerations; that the vast majority of voiceless Egyptians prefer good administration to national government; and that, therefore, for the present, and probably for a long time to come, the employment of a large number of Europeans is absolutely necessary. On the other hand, it is stated that the Egyptians prefer a defective system of government administered by their own countrymen to a relatively perfect system administered by aliens; that it is in the highest degree impolitic to push on education and at the same time to close the door of high Government employment to the educated classes; that the Egyptians can never learn to govern themselves unless they are allowed to make the attempt; that any causes which tend towards maladministration will be temporary and will gradually disappear as a result of the experience which will be gained; and that, therefore, the number of Europeans in the service of the Government should not merely be reduced to the lowest limit compatible with efficiency, but that that limit should be exceeded, and that temporary inefficiency, even in a somewhat marked degree, should be tolerated in order to attain the desired end.

---

[1] The numbers were, in 1896, Egyptians, 631; Europeans, 92; and, in 1906, Egyptians, 794; Europeans, 160.

There is not much to be gained by dwelling at length on the abstract principles enunciated above. The subject under discussion is eminently one as to which, for all purposes of practical politics, a compromise has to be effected between the extremes of the conflicting principles invoked on either side. What is quite clear is, that if Western civilisation is to be introduced into Egypt, it can only be done by Europeans, or by Egyptians who have imbibed the spirit of that civilisation, and have acquired the knowledge necessary in order to apply Western methods of government. The extent to which Europeans, or Egyptians who have received a European training, should respectively be employed, depends mainly on the supply which is available of the latter class. The main difficulty of dealing with the question is that, for the present, the demand for qualified Egyptians of this class is greatly in excess of the supply.

The general policy which has been pursued since the British occupation of the country took place, in 1882, has been to limit the number of Europeans in the employment of the Government as much as possible, to employ Egyptians in the very great majority of the subordinate and in a large number of the superior administrative posts, and gradually to prepare the ground for increasing the number of Egyptians in high employment. This policy is thoroughly understood by all the leading British officials in Egypt. Some, possibly, have been more successful than others in training their Egyptian subordinates. Some, again, may be inclined to insist on a rather excessive standard of efficiency on the part of the Egyptian before they will readily acquiesce in foregoing the appointment of a European. But the higher British officials in Egypt have never shown any tendency to question the wisdom of the policy, or the least reluctance to give effect to it when once they were convinced that a qualified Egyptian could be found to take any post which might happen to be vacant.

This matter is frequently discussed on the assumption that a number of places under Government are now occupied by Europeans for which competent Egyptians could, without difficulty, be found. I will not go so far as to say that this assumption is absolutely unfounded, but it certainly gives a very incorrect view of the facts of the situation. I do not doubt that there are a few cases as to which it may be said that, if the European occupant of some post vacated his place, a competent Egyptian might at once be found to replace him. But, in the very large majority of cases, the reason why the European holds the post is that to which I have already alluded, namely, that the supply of competent Egyptians is not nearly equal to the demand.

To any one who will calmly and impartially consider the recent history and the present situation in Egypt, the state of things which I have described above can be no matter for surprise. Rather would it be astonishing if the difficulties to which I have alluded had not occurred.

European agency is required in Egypt for two reasons: in the first place, to supply the technical knowledge, which, until very recently, the Egyptians have had no opportunity of acquiring; in the second place, to remedy those defects in the Egyptian character which have been developed by a long course of misgovernment.

In so far as numbers are concerned, the first is by far the more contributory cause. The rapidity with which the material prosperity of Egypt has advanced during the last fifteen or twenty years is probably without a parallel in history. The suddenness of the movement has proved by no means an unmixed blessing to the country. I will not dwell on the moral aspect of this question beyond saying that it is a commonplace of economics to hold that a great and sudden accretion of wealth, without any corresponding increase of knowledge as to how the newly acquired wealth should be used, is a very doubtful benefit, whether to an individual or a nation.

From the point of view of the question immediately under discussion, it cannot be doubted that this sudden leap from poverty to affluence greatly increased the difficulties of executing the policy of employing Egyptian rather than European agency in administrative work. For, when once the full tide of prosperity set in, demands arose on all sides for the employment of agents possessing technical knowledge of all sorts. European lawyers were required to deal with the numerous legal questions which arose, and in which a knowledge of Europeans and their laws was indispensable.

Hydraulic engineers were required to deal with irrigation questions; medical men, to look after the hospitals and the sanitary condition of the country; veterinary surgeons, to arrest the cattle plague; trained surveyors, to map the fields; mechanical engineers and mechanics, to perform a great variety of work — and so on. All these demands fell suddenly on a country almost wholly unprepared to meet them. Neither, although the difficulties which have subsequently arisen were in some degree foreseen, were the British advisers of the Egyptian Government able, during the early years of the occupation, to do much towards providing for them. For at least six years, all that could be done was to struggle against bankruptcy, to throw off the incubus of the Soudan, and by scraping together funds in order to improve the system of irrigation, to lay the foundations of the prosperity which the country now enjoys.

I shall, at a later period of this work, deal more fully with the question of education. Here I will only say that, for some years, educational progress was, owing to the financial difficulties against which the Government had to contend, necessarily slow. Recently it has been more rapid, and I now take a somewhat sanguine view of the possibility of gradually substituting Egyptian for European agency in those offices where the necessity for employing Europeans is at present based on the want of technical knowledge on the part of the Egyptians. But any attempt to hurry can only lead to disappointment, and, eventually, in all probability, to a reaction which will be to the detriment of Egyptian interests.

I have said that, besides those Europeans who are employed on the ground that their technical knowledge is indispensable, the services of others are necessary to act as some corrective to the defects of the Egyptian character. The number of those who may be classed in this category is comparatively small. On the other hand, they often occupy positions of greater importance than those who are employed merely by reason of their technical skill. The substitution of Egyptian for European agency must necessarily take even more time in these cases than in those where the transfer depends on the acquisition of technical knowledge by the Egyptians. National character is a plant of slow growth. Such instruction as can be afforded in schools and colleges only constitutes one of the elements which contribute to its modification and development. All that can be said is that no effort should be spared to foster the growth of all those moral and intellectual qualities which, collectively, tend to the formation of character. I may add that amongst the defects which, for purposes of administration, appear most of all to require rectification, are, the fear of assuming individual responsibility; the absence of adequate capacity to exercise with firmness, intelligence, and consideration for others, such functions as are usually vested in responsible agents; and the tendency, so common amongst Egyptians, of running to extremes both in thought and action.

Before leaving this branch of the subject, it may be as well that I should give some figures showing the extent to which Europeans are now employed in the Egyptian service.[1]

The following table shows the composition of the Egyptian Civil Service at the close of the years 1896 and 1906 respectively :—

---

[1] A more detailed analysis of these figures was given in my Report for the year 1906, *Egypt,* No. 1 of 1907, pp. 33-44. The remarks made above are quoted almost textually from this Report.

| Year. | Egyptians. | Europeans. | Total. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1896 | 8444 | 690 | 9134 |
| 1906 | 12,027 | 1252 | 13,279 |

In the course of the decade, therefore, the total number of officials increased by 4145. Of these, 3583 were Egyptians, and 562 were Europeans. I should mention that, out of the total increase of 562 Europeans, no less than 303 belonged to the Railway Administration, over which, until quite recently, the Egyptian Government have been able to exercise little or no control. Further, it is to be remembered that not only the convenience, but also, to a great extent, the lives of the travelling public depend on efficient railway administration. Hence, there is in this case relatively little scope for the application of the general and semi-political arguments involved in the issues now under discussion.

These figures bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the number of Europeans appointed to the Egyptian public service has been strictly controlled. It may be that in some few cases additional Europeans will be required, but these will be more than counterbalanced by the increase of Egyptians in other Departments. In view of the rapid strides being made in education—more especially in technical education—there now appears for the first time to be a prospect of carrying out more fully than heretofore what has always been the real policy of the British Government in Egypt. The execution of that policy was retarded by financial difficulties which, since the Anglo-French Agreement was signed, have been to a great extent removed.

One observation may be added before leaving this branch of the subject. It is that in countries such as India and Egypt the best policy to pursue is to employ a small body of well-selected and well-paid Europeans. Everything depends on finding the right man for the right place. If he can be found, it is worth while to pay him well. It is a mistake to employ second or third-rate Europeans on low salaries. They often do more harm than good. Public opinion generally condemns high salaries, but on this particular point the European administrator in the East will do well to follow his own judgment and not to be unduly influenced by outside criticism. It is worth while to pay something extra in order to secure the services of a really competent and thoroughly trustworthy official.

## CHAPTER XLI

### THE INTERNATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

Internationalism—1. THE COMMISSION OF THE PUBLIC DEBT—Functions of the Commission—The Egyptian Accounts—The Reserve Fund—Uselessness of the Commission—2. THE RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION—3. THE DAIRA SANIEH—4. THE DOMAINS ADMINISTRATION.

COSMOPOLITANISM, as opposed to exclusive patriotism, has ever been the dream of theorists and the butt of practical statesmen. Probably, few lines of any British poet have been more frequently quoted—especially of late years—than those in which Canning ridiculed the "friend of every country but his own." Of recent years, although there has been no diminution but rather a recrudescence of international rivalry, a tendency towards the international treatment both of European and of extra-European questions has become manifest, not only amongst theorists, but amongst practical statesmen. This tendency is the natural outcome of the circumstances which obtained in the latter part of the nineteenth century. There appears little prospect that the Utopia of the early free-traders will be realised. Trade, with its handmaids, the railway and the telegraph, does not so far appear to have bound nations together in any closer bonds of amity than existed in the days of slow locomotion and communication. On the other hand, the European body politic has become more sensitive than heretofore. National interests tend towards cosmopolitanism, however much national sentiments and aspirations may tend towards exclusive patriotism. The whole world is quickly informed of any incident which may occur in any part of the globe. Not only in the cabinet of every Minister, but in the office of every newspaper editor the questions to which its occurrence instantly give rise are, how does this circumstance affect the affairs of my country? What course should be taken in order to safeguard our interests? It is more difficult than heretofore to segregate a quarrel between any two States. In a certain sense Europeans, in spite of themselves, have become members of a single family, though not always of a happy family. They are all oppressed by one common dread, and that is that some accident may precipitate a general war, of which not the wisest can foretell the final issue. If any minor State shows a tendency to light the match which may lead to a general conflagration, the voice of international rivalry is to some extent hushed in presence of the danger, and the diplomatic fire-engine is turned on from every capital in Europe in order to quench the flame before it can spread. A certain power of acting together has thus been developed amongst the nations and Governments of Europe, and it cannot be doubted that the world has benefited by the change. In all the larger affairs of state, internationalism constitutes a guarantee for peace. It in some measure obliges particular interests to yield for the general good of the European community.

Internationalism has, however, done more than group together certain States and ensure common or quasi-common action on occasions of supreme importance. Semi-civilised countries, in which the rulers are sometimes only possessed of incomplete sovereign rights, open up a wide field for the development of internationalism. In such countries, some European Powers have interests which they wish to safeguard without arousing the jealousy of their rivals by too open an assertion of strength, whilst others are led to claim a seat at the international table in order to assert their political existence and to remind the world that their interests, albeit they are of relatively slight importance, cannot be altogether neglected. Cases sometimes arise which involve prolonged supervision and control in the interests of the European Powers, but which do not justify exclusive action on the part of any one of them, or which, if they justify it, are of a nature not to allow of exclusive action without a risk of discord in respect to the particular nation by whom it is to be exercised. What can be more natural in cases of this kind than for the Powers to say—we are agreed as to all that is essential; certain points of detail remain to be settled locally; let us each appoint an expert who will represent our interests and see that they get fair play, but who at the same time will have no very marked political bias, and who will treat the technical questions which come under his consideration on their own merits? Nothing could in appearance be more equitable or more calculated to obviate the risk of serious friction.

But alas! however much exclusiveness may in appearance be expelled by the cosmopolitan pitchfork, it but too often comes back again to its natural resting-place. The experiment of administrative internationalism has probably been tried in the No Man's Land of which this history treats to a greater extent than in any other country. The result cannot be said to be encouraging to those who believe in the efficacy of international action in administrative matters. What has been proved is that international institutions possess admirable negative qualities. They are formidable checks to all action, and the reason why they are so is that, when any action is proposed, objections of one sort or another generally occur to some member of the international body. Any action often involves a presumed advantage accorded to some rival nation, and it is a principle of internationalism, which is scornfully rejected in theory and but too often recognised as a guide for practical action, that it is better to do nothing, even though evil may ensue, than to allow good to be done at the expense of furthering the interests, or of exalting the reputation of an international rival. For all purposes of action, therefore, administrative internationalism may be said to tend towards the creation of administrative impotence.

### 1. *Commission of the Public Debt.*

The Commission of the Public Debt originally consisted of four members, an Englishman, a Frenchman, an Austrian, and an Italian. In 1885, a German and a Russian Commissioner were added, thus bringing the total number of Commissioners up to six. Until 1904, the functions of the Commission were briefly as follows.

The officials responsible for the collection of the revenues pledged to the service of the Debt were under an obligation to pay all monies collected by them into the hands of the Commissioners, and to furnish them with the information necessary in order to enable an effective financial control to be exercised. The Commissioners had a right to name and dismiss their own employés. No loan could be contracted without their consent. Lastly, and this was a provision of the highest importance, the Commissioners, in their capacity of legal representatives of the bondholders, were empowered to sue the Egyptian Government in the Mixed Courts in the event of any infringement of the Law of Liquidation taking place.

It will be seen that the powers thus conferred on the Commissioners were extensive. Nevertheless, those portions of the Law of Liquidation to which allusion has so far been made, did not in practice give rise to much difficulty subsequent to the British occupation. They were provisions intended to guard against an act of bankruptcy, and inasmuch as the result of the British occupation was to place the Egyptian Treasury in a state of assured solvency, any preventive action on the part of the Commission of the Debt became unnecessary when once the first few years of acute crisis were passed.

Other functions were, however, vested in the Commissioners, which were of greater practical importance.

The Law of Liquidation, coupled with the Decree of July 27, 1885, which was promulgated on the occasion of the issue of an Egyptian Loan of £9,000,000 guaranteed by the Powers of Europe, laid down a method for balancing the accounts of the Egyptian Treasury at the end of each year which was a triumph of financial cumbersomeness and ineptitude. At the time of the London Conference, the French, who were supported by some other Continental Powers, were politically hostile to England, and, moreover, looked almost exclusively to the interests of the bondholders. The British Treasury officials could see but one point, namely, that the Government of Egypt were embarrassed by having spent too much money in the past; therefore, it was held, a stringent control should be exercised to prevent extravagant expenditure in the future. The argument was sound, but it was forgotten at the time that the expenditure was being incurred under conditions wholly different from those which had obtained in the past. A wise foresight would have given greater latitude to the British advisers of the Egyptian Government than could have been prudently accorded to Ismail Pasha. It was, however, impossible to obtain a hearing for arguments of this nature. The Egyptian Government did, indeed, manage to obtain a sum of £1,000,000 to spend on Irrigation, but beyond this it was found impossible to shake the mistrust of the French and the preconceived ideas of the British Treasury officials. The latter aided in establishing a system which proved subsequently to be a fertile source of embarrassment to their own countrymen in Egypt.

It had been laid down by the Decrees of 1876 that certain revenues should be pledged to the service of the Debt, whilst other revenues should be left at the disposal of the Egyptian Government to provide for their administrative expenditure. When the Guaranteed Loan of 1885 was contracted, the distribution of what, in Gallicised English, are called the "affected" and the "non-affected" revenues, had to be reconsidered. Care was taken to increase the relative amount of the former, so that the bondholders should not run any risk, with the result that the amount of the latter was relatively diminished. The administrative expenditure was fixed at a certain figure, the only concession, which was with difficulty obtained, being that the working expenses of the Railway administration should not be unalterable, but should be taken at 45 per cent[1] of the gross receipts. If the non-affected revenues did not yield the sum at which the administrative expenditure was fixed, the deficit had to be made good from the affected revenues. The surplus on the whole account consisted of the money remaining in the hands of the Commissioners of the Debt from the affected revenues after the deficit in the non-affected revenues, if any, had been made good. This surplus was divided into two portions. One portion remained in the hands of the Commissioners; the other was paid to the Egyptian Government. The result was that, if the Government wished to spend £10 in excess of the administrative limit prescribed by international agreement, revenue to the extent of £20 had to be collected in order to meet the expenditure. As the country progressed, legitimate demands for fresh expenditure arose, but under the system devised in 1885, the anomaly was presented that the Government had to pay double for everything in the nature of an improvement involving fresh expenditure; that the administration was starved; that money was plentiful; but that no one benefited in any adequate degree from its abundance.

---

[1] In 1902, after prolonged negotiations, this figure was increased to a maximum of 55 per cent.

It would be tedious to describe in detail the involved calculation which had to be made before the true surplus at the disposal of the Egyptian Treasury could be ascertained. It will be sufficient to quote the figures of one year as an example of the results obtained under the system.

In 1892, the revenue of the Egyptian Government amounted to £E.10,364,000, and the expenditure to £E.9,595,000. It would naturally be supposed by any one unacquainted with the intricacies of Egyptian finance that a surplus remained at the disposal of the Government amounting to the difference between these two sums, namely,

£E.769,000. Any such conclusion would have been altogether erroneous.

After winding through the financial labyrinth, which was constructed by the Powers, and which is a typical instance of the results of international administration, it was found that the real surplus in the hands of the Egyptian Treasury was only £E.179,000, a difference of no less than £E.590,000. Appearances in Egypt are deceptive.

It was originally intended that any surplus remaining in the hands of the Commissioners should be applied to the extinction of debt. For the first few years of the British occupation, this matter was not of much practical importance, as no surplus was available. But when financial affairs became more settled, Sir Edgar Vincent's inventive mind gave birth to a scheme under which the surplus at the end of each year was to be allowed to accumulate in a Reserve Fund. Extinction of debt was not to begin until the Reserve Fund amounted to £E.2,000,000. Thus, the Treasury would, it was hoped, eventually have a large sum of money in hand to guard against any unforeseen contingencies which might occur.

The idea was excellent. It obtained the assent of the Powers, and was embodied in a Decree dated July 12, 1888. Article 3 of this Decree described how the money belonging to the Reserve Fund might be spent. *Inter alia*, it was to be applied to "extraordinary expenditure undertaken with the previous assent of the Commission of the Debt." This was a provision of great importance, for as the Reserve Fund increased, it was found possible to turn the money over, and, by making advances to the Government, to allow various works of public utility to be constructed. As, however, it rested with the Commission to decide whether any advance should be made, it is obvious that, under the Decree of 1888, the powers vested in the Commissioners were notably increased.[1]

Such, therefore, were the attributes of the Commission of the Public Debt. During Ismail Pasha's time, this institution, though its organisation was in many respects defective, played an important and useful part in Egyptian affairs. Subsequent to the British occupation, the inutility of the Commission became, year by year, more apparent. It cost the Treasury some £E.40,000 a year. All the necessary work of a National Debt Office could have been done by one official and a small staff of clerks.

In blaming the institution, however, it would be unjust to cast indiscriminate blame on the individuals concerned. Some of the Commissioners have been intelligent and capable men who have performed their duties in a reasonable spirit of impartiality. Indeed, the Egyptian authorities have always preferred dealing with the Commission of the Debt to dealing with the Powers. The Commissioners, being on the spot, are exposed to local influences, and possess a certain amount of local knowledge. They are, therefore, more likely to judge financial matters on their own merits than those who, sitting at a distance, look at Egyptian affairs from a wholly political point of view. It is, however, none the less true that whatever reforms have been accomplished with the co-operation of the Caisse could have been equally well and probably better accomplished had the Caisse not existed. The only purpose which this institution eventually served was to act as an obstacle to progress, and occasionally as an agency for the manifestation of hostility towards England. It often happens that an institution survives after the circumstances to which it owes its origin have passed away. The result is that the institution becomes hurtful, although the individuals associated with it may be deserving of respect. This is what took place with regard to the Commission of the Public Debt.

---

[1] The question of how this Decree should be interpreted gave rise to a lawsuit when, in 1896, a majority of the Commissioners of the Debt made a grant of £E.500,000 to meet the expenses of the Dongola campaign.—*Vide* p. 85 *et seq.*

In 1904, as a result of negotiations with the Powers, the functions of the Commission of the Debt underwent a radical change. Without going into any elaborate detail, it may be said that the Commissioners are now merely receivers on the part of the bondholders. They cannot in any way interfere with administrative affairs.

In 1912, the Egyptian Government will be free to convert the whole of the Debt. If the conversion takes place, the Commission of the Debt will presumably disappear altogether.

### 2. *Railway Administration.*

Under the Decree of November 18, 1876, a Board was constituted to administer the Railways, the Telegraphs, and the Port of Alexandria. It originally consisted of two Englishmen, of whom one was President, a Frenchman, and two Egyptians. Subsequently, the number of English and of Egyptian members was reduced to one of each nationality.

The English and French members were named on the proposal of their respective Governments. The Board made appointments to all subordinate places in the administration. The superior officials were nominated by the Khedive on the proposal of the Board. Changes of tariff were made by the Board with the sanction of the Egyptian Government.

Two very competent Englishmen, Colonel Marindin and Mr. (now Lord) Farrer, were employed in 1887 to report on the Egyptian Railways. This is the judgment which they passed on the system of administration :—

"The administration of the Egyptian Railways, as at present constituted, differs considerably from any with which we are acquainted. The control is vested in three members whose functions are undefined as regards the different branches of the working of the railway. We understand that there is no one individual who is separately responsible for the management of the railways. It is obvious that the result of this divided responsibility has been especially injurious to the working of a commercial business such as railways must necessarily be, and we are of opinion that it is absolutely essential for the satisfactory working of the Egyptian Railways, and for the maintenance of discipline upon them, that the management of them, as a whole, together with the control of heads of Departments, should be vested in one person with a position analogous to that of the Managing Director or General Manager of Railways in other countries."

Obviously, the management should have been vested in one person, but internationalism abhors the one-man system as much as nature abhors a vacuum. The sheet-anchor of internationalism is, indeed, that several men should be set to do the work of one.

It was, however, said of Richelieu, by one of his enemies, "il est capable de tout, même du bien." So also it may be noted that international administration, although it can never yield fruits at all comparable with those which may be obtained under more rational administrative systems, may at times be forced into some degree of action, and will then produce results which the casual observer may think are due to the excellence of the system, whereas they are in reality for the most part obtained by the occurrence of adventitious circumstances in spite of the system. Administrative internationalism, like Richelieu, is occasionally capable, if not of absolute good, at all events of assuming a fictitious appearance of goodness.

Thus, the Egyptian Railways benefited by the increase of prosperity and by the general reforming impulse which was imparted to the Egyptian administrative machine by the predominance of British influence in the country. They would have benefited still more had the British reformers been from the first allowed a free hand in dealing with their administration.

In 1904, as a consequence of the arrangements with the Powers, to which allusion has already been made, the Egyptian Government acquired full right to deal with the Railway Administration in any way they might think fit.

Few, save those behind the scenes, have probably recognised fully that the Anglo-French Agreement was only signed just in time to prevent a complete breakdown of the Railway Administration. Such, however, is unquestionably the case. If means had not been found to spend a large amount of capital on developments and improvements, the railways of Egypt would have been wholly unable to cope with the growing requirements of the country.

Towards the close of 1905, Sir Charles Scotter visited Egypt and made a full report on the condition of the Egyptian Railways.[1] His suggestions are now being carried out. The Railway Administration is being thoroughly reorganised. Capital expenditure to the extent of £3,000,000 has been sanctioned, of which £1,635,000 was expended before the close of 1906. It is probable that an additional grant of £1,000,000 will be eventually required. Thus, it may be hoped that before long the Egyptian Railway Administration will be in thoroughly good order.

---

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1906, pp. 110-113.

Looking back to one of my earliest Reports[1] I notice that in 1890, the Egyptian Railways carried 4,700,000 passengers and 1,683,000 tons of goods. In 1906, they carried no less than 22,550,000 passengers and 20,036,000 tons of goods. These figures serve as a striking illustration of the immense improvement in the material condition of the country which has taken place during the last few years. They also afford an ample justification for the large reductions which have been made in the rates.[2]

In addition to the State Railways, a network of 1145 kilometres of Agricultural Railways, which are owned by private companies, exists in Egypt. These railways are largely used. In 1906, they carried 6,924,000 passengers and 929,000 tons of goods.

### 3. *Daira Sanieh.*

The Daira properties formed part of the huge estates which Ismail Pasha contrived, generally by illicit and arbitrary methods, to accumulate in his own hands. They originally extended over an area of more than half a million of acres. When Ismail got into financial difficulties, he borrowed

---

[1] *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1892, p. 20.

[2] I may remark that the same lesson is to be learnt from an examination of the statistics of the Post Office and Telegraph Departments, in both of which the rates have been largely reduced. In 1885, only 12,500,000 letters and 83,000 parcels passed through the Post Office. In 1905, the figures were: letters, 50,700,000; parcels, 250,000. In 1906, no less than 1,925,000 telegrams, of which 1,248,000 were in Arabic, passed over the lines, as compared to about 311,000 in 1890.

£9,500,000 on the security of these properties. They were administered by a Board of Directors, consisting of an Egyptian Director-General, and two Controllers, one British and one French. The Director-General was the executive officer, but the Controllers had ample powers of supervision and inspection. They alone were the legal representatives of the bondholders.

Until the year 1891, the Daira expenditure was always in excess of the revenue. On several occasions the deficits exceeded £200,000. With the exception of the year 1895, when there was a deficit amounting to £102,000, the accounts of every year subsequent to 1890 showed a surplus. In the two years 1904-5, the revenue exceeded the expenditure by no less than £817,000.

In 1898, an arrangement was made under which the Daira estates were sold to a company, who again resold them in lots. The sales are now complete. Most of the purchasers were Egyptians. The Government share in the profits of the liquidation amounted to about £3,280,000.

### 4. *The Domains Administration.*

The properties, known by the name of the Domains, comprise the estates ceded, under pressure, by Ismail Pasha in 1878.[1] On the security of these estates, a loan of £8,500,000 was negotiated with Messrs. Rothschild. It was, at the same time, arranged that the Domains should be administered by a Commission consisting of an Englishman, a Frenchman, and an Egyptian.

Up to the year 1899, the revenue yielded by the estates was invariably less than the expenditure. In one year (1885) the deficit amounted to no less than £275,000. From 1900 onwards, a surplus, varying from £26,000 to £150,000, was always realised.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* vol. i. p. 63.

By gradual sales[1] the extent of the Domains properties, which originally consisted of nearly 426,000 acres of land, was reduced by the close of 1906 to about 147,000 acres. Simultaneously, the outstanding capital of the loan was reduced from £8,500,000 to about £1,316,000.[2] It cannot be doubted that the whole of this loan will be paid off before long, and that, when this is done, some very valuable lands will remain at the disposal of the Government.[3]

With the sale of the Daira and Domains lands, almost the last traces of the injury which Ismail Pasha inflicted on his country, by accumulating 1,000,000 acres of the best land in Egypt in the hands of himself and his family, will disappear.

Some comprehension of these institutions is necessary in order to understand the extent to which the freedom of action of the British officials in Egypt was at one time crippled. A brief examination of that curious mosaic termed the Judicial System of Egypt will tend to bring into still stronger relief the anomalous position occupied by the Anglo-Egyptian reformer. In the case of those institutions of which I have so far treated, the shackles have now been, for the most part, struck off. In the case of those with which I am about to deal, they still remain and bar the way to reform.

---

[1] The great majority of the purchasers have been Egyptians. The land was, for the most part, sold in small lots.

[2] On November 30, 1907, the outstanding capital of this loan amounted to only £1,050,940.

[3] If the present price of land is maintained, the value of the estates which will remain over after the complete liquidation of the loan will probably be about £5,000,000.

# CHAPTER XLII

## THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The Mixed Courts—Nubar Pasha's objects in creating them—Attributes and composition of the Mixed Courts—Defects in the institution—The Consular Courts—The Native Tribunals and the Kadi's Courts—Summary of jurisdictions in Egypt.

In creating the International Tribunals, or, as they are more frequently called, the Mixed Courts, Nubar Pasha had two objects in view. In the first place, he was struck with the fact that, inasmuch as the European adventurers who flocked to Egypt during the reigns of Said and of Ismail had no legal means for obtaining a redress of any real or imaginary grievances, they fell back, in case of need, on diplomatic support, with results that were not unfrequently disastrous to the Egyptian Treasury. Nubar Pasha, therefore, conceived the statesmanlike project of creating law-courts, which should command the confidence of Europe, and which should be empowered to try civil suits between Europeans, on the one hand, and Egyptians or the Egyptian Government, on the other hand. In the second place, although in dealing with Ismail Pasha this aspect of the case was kept in the background, Nubar Pasha wished to erect a legal barrier between the population of Egypt and the capricious despotism of the Khedive. His original intention was to place all the inhabitants of Egypt, whether Europeans or Egyptians, under the jurisdiction of the Mixed Courts. This part of the project, however, fell to the ground owing to the strong opposition which it encountered at Constantinople, and perhaps it was as well that it did so, for the complete realisation of Nubar Pasha's idea would have entailed the internationalisation of the whole judicial system of the country.

Nubar Pasha's first object was, however, attained. From 1875 onwards, any European who has had a claim either against an Egyptian or against the Egyptian Government, has no longer been under the necessity of seeking diplomatic support. He has been referred both by the Egyptian Government and by the diplomatic agent of his country to a properly constituted law-court in which it was competent for him to make good his claim, if it was a just one. From every point of view, the result has been beneficial. The claimant, with the Egyptian code before him, has been able to form a fair idea of what he might expect from the law-courts. The Egyptian Government have, on the one hand, been obliged to acknowledge their legal and contractual obligations; on the other hand, they have been relieved from capricious diplomatic pressure on behalf of individuals, and they have not unfrequently invoked the law with success in order to be saved from the exorbitant demands of contractors and others. The diplomatic agent has been relieved from the unpleasant obligation of supporting claims, which were often of doubtful validity from a technical, and of more than doubtful morality from an equitable point of view.

By the irony of fate, the institution to which Ismail Pasha was induced to assent, probably with only a half knowledge of what it meant, was the instrument which dealt him his political deathblow. When the law-courts, to whose creation the Powers of Europe had been parties, condemned him to pay certain sums of money, and when he found himself unable to pay them, the cup of his iniquity overflowed, and Europe—legally outraged, and politically timorous of what the future might bring forth—spoke out and said, "You must pay or go." Ismail Pasha could not pay. After a few ineffectual struggles, he went.

It is unnecessary to describe at length the attributes and composition of the Mixed Courts. It will be sufficient to say that a Court of Appeal sits at Alexandria, and that three Courts of First Instance exist, one at Cairo, one at Alexandria, and one at Mansourah. Egyptian judges sit on all these Courts, but most of the real work is done by Europeans. The European judges of the Court of Appeal are for the most part chosen from amongst the subjects of the Great Powers. All the Powers, without distinction, are represented on the Courts of First Instance. The choice of judges rests nominally with the Egyptian Government. In reality, the judges have until quite recently been nominated by their respective Governments. The jurisdiction of the Mixed Courts extends over all civil cases between Europeans and Egyptians, whether the European appears as plaintiff or defendant; also, over civil cases between Europeans of different nationalities.

The principal defect of the Mixed Courts is that the judges are not merely interpreters of the law; they are also to a great extent makers of it. They are not under the effective control of any legislature. If, as is both natural and occasionally almost unavoidable, they attempt, by a somewhat strained interpretation of their charter, to usurp functions which do not belong to them, there is no one to restrain them. In order that any new law should be recognised by the Mixed Courts, it must receive the assent of all the

Powers, and experience has shown that it is generally impossible, and always difficult and tedious, to ensure the required unanimity. Legislation by diplomacy is probably the worst and most cumbersome form of legislation in the world. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand that the judges of the Mixed Courts are practically a law unto themselves.

When the Indian code was framed, some of the most acute intellects of the time devoted themselves to a lengthy examination of the subject with a view to deciding what provisions of European law and procedure, whether British or Roman, could be adapted to the circumstances and requirements of India. The result was the production of an admirable code, which was essentially Indian. No such care was taken in Egypt. The Egyptian code was originally little more than a textual copy of the French code, and, moreover, it was applied by judges who, although in some instances men of ability, were necessarily ignorant of Egyptian manners and customs. The result was that great hardship was at times inflicted, more especially in respect to the application of the laws regulating the relations between debtor and creditor. The ignorant Egyptian debtor found himself, before he was aware of it, gripped in the iron hand of the law, which was mercilessly applied by his Levantine creditor. Eventually, some modifications were made, but even now the law and procedure are too European for the country.

The Mixed Courts only exercise criminal jurisdiction over Europeans in a certain number of specified cases, most of which are of rare occurrence. For the most part, any European resident in Egypt who is accused of crime is tried by his Consul according to the laws of his own country.

The Native Tribunals instituted under Lord

Dufferin's auspices exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction over Ottoman subjects, save in respect to matters relating to personal status, which are decided by the Kadi according to the system of ecclesiastical jurisprudence embodied in the Sacred Law of Islam. The working of these Tribunals will be discussed at a later period of this work.

To sum up, if an Egyptian and a European wish some civil cause of dispute between them to be decided, they go to the Mixed Courts. If an European commits a criminal offence against an Egyptian, he is tried by his Consul, with an appeal possibly to Aix, Ancona, Odessa, or elsewhere, according to the nationality of the accused. If an Egyptian brings a civil suit against another Egyptian, or if he commits any criminal offence whether against a European or another Egyptian, he comes under the jurisdiction of the Native Tribunals, which administer the French code, modified in some respects to suit Egypt. If an Egyptian wishes to prove a will or to dispute a succession, he has to go to the Kadi, who will decide according to the Sheriat.

Enough has now been said to give an idea of the main features of the judicial labyrinth which time and international rivalry have built up in Egypt.

# CHAPTER XLIII

## THE WORKERS OF THE MACHINE

Importance of persons rather than of systems—The British Consul-General—Tewfik Pasha—The Prime Ministers—Chérif Pasha—Nubar Pasha—Riaz Pasha—Mustapha Pasha Fehmi.

An endeavour has been made in the four preceding chapters to give some idea of the machinery of Government in Egypt in so far as the different parts of the machine can be described by reference to documents setting forth the official functions which are assigned to the various individuals and corporations who collectively make or, at one time, made up the governing body. This description is, however, incomplete; indeed, in some respects it is almost misleading; for allusion has so far only been made to those portions of the State machinery whose functions can be described with some degree of precision. There are, however, other portions of that machinery whose functions are incapable of exact definition, but whose existence is none the less real. Whether, in fact, the whole machine works well or ill depends in no small degree upon the action of those parts of the machinery which, to a superficial observer, might appear unnecessary, if not detrimental to its efficient working. In the Egyptian body politic, the unseen is often more important than the seen. Notably, of late years a vague but preponderant power has been vested in the hands of the British Consul-General. The defects in this system of government are obvious. Its only justification is that, under the existing condition of affairs in Egypt, it is impossible to substitute anything better in its place.

I proceed to give a sketch of the duties of the British Consul-General, but inasmuch as during the greater portion of the period of which this history treats, I occupied the post of Consul-General, I must, for obvious reasons, leave it to others to appreciate the manner in which those duties were performed.

Looking to the general condition of Egyptian society; to the unscrupulous methods by which it was customary to advance personal aims; to the untruthfulness, corruption, and intrigue with which Egyptian society was honeycombed; and finally, to the fact that whatever pseudo-civilisation existed in Egypt was often tainted by reason of its having drawn its inspirations from those portions of the European social system which are least worthy of imitation,—it always appeared to me that the first and most important duty of the British representative in Egypt was, by example and precept, to set up a high standard of morality, both in his public and private life, and thus endeavour to raise the standard of those around him. If I have in any way succeeded in this endeavour; if I have helped to purge Egyptian administration of corruption; if it is gradually dawning on the Egyptian mind that honesty is not only the most honourable but also the most paying policy, and that lying and intrigue curse the liar and intriguer as well as his victim,—I owe the success, in so far as public matters are concerned, to the co-operation of a body of high-minded British officials who have persistently held up to all with whom they have been brought in contact a standard of probity heretofore unknown in Egypt, and, in so far as social life is concerned, I owed it, until cruel death intervened to sever the tie which bound us together, mainly to the gentle yet commanding influence of her who first instigated me to write this book.

The duty of a diplomatic agent in a foreign country is to carry out to the best of his ability the policy of the Government which he serves. My main difficulty in Egypt was that the British Government never had any definite policy which was capable of execution; they were, indeed, at one time constantly striving to square the circle, that is to say, they were endeavouring to carry out two policies which were irreconcilable, namely, the policy of reform, and the counter-policy of evacuation. The British Government are not to be blamed on this account. The circumstances were of a nature to preclude the possibility of adopting a clear-cut line of action, which would have enabled the means to be on all occasions logically adapted to the end.

I never received any general instructions for my guidance during the time I held the post of British Consul-General in Egypt, and I never asked for any such instructions, for I knew that it was useless for me to do so. My course of action was decided according to the merits of each case with which I had to deal. Sometimes I spurred the unwilling Egyptian along the path of reform. At other times, I curbed the impatience of the British reformer. Sometimes I had to explain to the old-world Mohammedan, the Mohammedan of the Sheriât, the elementary differences between the principles of government in vogue in the seventh and in the nineteenth centuries. At other times, I had to explain to the young Gallicised Egyptian that the principles of an ultra-Republican Government were not applicable in their entirety to the existing phase of Egyptian society, and that, when we speak of the rights of man, some distinction has necessarily to be made in practice between a European spouting nonsense through the medium of a fifth-rate newspaper in his own country, and man in the person of a ragged Egyptian fellah, possessed of a sole garment, and who is unable to read a newspaper in any language whatsoever. I had to support the reformer sufficiently to prevent him from being discouraged, and sufficiently also to enable him to carry into execution all that was essential in his reforming policy. I had to check the reformer when he wished to push his reforms so far as to shake the whole political fabric[1] in his endeavour to overcome the tiresome and, to his eyes, often trumpery obstacles in his path, and thus lay bare to the world that measures which were dictated in the true interests of Egypt were opposed by many who had, by accident or by the political cant of the day, been elevated to the position of being the putative representatives of Egyptian public opinion. I had to support the supremacy of the Sultan and, at the same time, to oppose any practical Turkish interference in the administration, which necessarily connoted a relapse into barbarism. I had at one time to do nothing inconsistent with a speedy return to Egyptian self-government, or, at all events, a return to government by the hybrid coterie of Cairo, which flaunts before the world as the personification of Egyptian autonomy; whilst, at the same time, I was well aware that, for a long time to come, European guidance will be essential if the administration is to be conducted on sound principles. I had at times to retire into my diplomatic shell, and to pose as one amongst many representatives of foreign Powers. At other times, I had to step forward as the representative of the Sovereign whose soldiers held Egypt in their grip. At one time, I had to defend Egypt against European aggression, and, not unfrequently, I had in the early days of the occupation to defend the British position against foreign attack. I had to keep in touch with the well-intentioned, generally reasonable, but occasionally ill-informed public opinion of England, when I knew that the praise or blame of the British Parliament and press was a very faulty standard by which to judge the wisdom or unwisdom of my acts. I had to maintain British authority and, at the same time, to hide as much as possible the fact that I was maintaining it. I had a military force at my disposal, which I could not use save in the face of some grave emergency. I had to work through British agents over whom I possessed no control, save that based on personal authority and moral suasion. I had to avoid any step which might involve the creation of European difficulties by reason of local troubles. I had to keep the Egyptian question simmering, and to avoid any action which might tend to force on its premature consideration, and I had to do this at one time when all, and at another time when some of the most important Powers were more or less opposed to British policy. Lastly, the most heterogeneous petty questions were continually coming before me. If a young British officer was cheated at cards, I had to get him out of his difficulties. If a slave girl wanted to marry, I had to bring moral pressure on her master or mistress to give their consent. If a Jewish sect wished for official recognition from the Egyptian Government, I was expected to obtain it, and to explain to an Egyptian Minister all I knew of the difference between Ashkenazian and Sephardic practices. If the inhabitants of some remote village in Upper Egypt were discontented with their Sheikh, they appealed to me. I have had to write telegrams and despatches about the most miscellaneous subjects—about the dismissal of the Khedive's English coachman, about preserving the lives of Irish informers from the Clan-na-Gael conspirators, and about the tenets of the Abyssinian Church in respect to the Procession of the Holy Ghost. I have been asked to interfere in order to get a German missionary, who had been guilty of embezzlement, out of prison; in order to get a place for the French and Italian Catholics to bury their dead; in order to get a dead Mohammedan of great sanctity exhumed; in order to prevent a female member of the Khedivial family from striking her husband over the mouth with a slipper; and in order to arrange a marriage between two other members of the same family whom hard-hearted relatives kept apart. I have had to take one English maniac in my own carriage to a Lunatic Asylum; I have caused another to be turned out of the English church; and I have been informed that a third and remarkably muscular madman was on his way to my house, girt with a towel round his loins, and bearing a poker in his hands with the intention of using that implement on my head. I have been asked by an Egyptian fellah to find out the whereabouts of his wife who had eloped; and by a German professor to send him at once six live electric shad-fish, from the Nile. To sum up the situation in a few words, I had not, indeed, to govern Egypt, but to assist in the government of the country without the appearance of doing so and without any legitimate authority over the agents with whom I had to deal.

---

[1] Sir John Seeley (*Growth of British Policy*, ii. p. 323), speaking of William III., says: "The main reason why his work has proved so strangely durable is that it was never excessive. He had a wise parsimony in action. . . . The masterpieces of the statesman's art are for the most part not acts, but abstinences from action." A somewhat similar view was frequently advanced by Burke.

Under these somewhat bewildering circumstances, the only general principles which I was able to lay down for my own guidance were, first, to settle all purely local matters on the spot, with as little reference as possible to London; secondly, to refer for instructions in respect to any matter which was calculated either to raise diplomatic questions outside the local sphere of interest, or to attract serious attention in Parliament. On the whole, I think it may be said that this system worked as well as could, under the very peculiar circumstances of the situation, have been expected. A middle course was steered between the extremes of centralisation and decentralisation.

It is clear that the working of a nondescript Government, such as that which has existed in Egypt since 1882, must depend mainly on the personal characteristics of the individuals who are at the head of affairs. The principal person who figured on the Egyptian stage during the first nine years of the British occupation was the late Khedive, Tewfik Pasha.

The best friends of Tewfik Pasha would probably not contend that he was a great man or an ideal Khedive. There was, in fact, no real greatness about him. He was a monogamist, and thus set a good example to his countrymen. He was an indulgent and well-intentioned father who endeavoured to educate his children well. He acquired a reputation for devotion, whilst he was devoid of any tinge of the intolerance with which devout Islamism is sometimes tainted. His piety kept him in touch with his Moslem subjects, and thus constituted a political factor of some importance. Judged by the standard of his surroundings, he was loyal and straightforward. Like most of his countrymen, he would shirk responsibility, and would endeavour to throw as much as he could on the shoulders of others. He would complain of the number of Europeans in the Egyptian service, and when any European asked him for a place, he would reply that personally he would be delighted to grant the request, but that some British authority prevented him from following the benevolent dictates of his heart. He was apathetic, and wanting in initiative, but, when forced to take a decision, would not unfrequently show a good deal of dignified common sense and shrewdness. He was kind-hearted, and even at times displayed some signs of gratitude for services rendered to him, a quality which is rare in an Oriental ruler. Warned by the example of his father, he shunned extravagance to the extent, indeed, of being occasionally accused of avarice, but he sometimes performed acts of real generosity. There was little of the typical Oriental despot in Tewfik Pasha's character. He professed a deep, and, without doubt, genuine dislike to all arbitrary, oppressive, or cruel acts. He was never personally responsible for the commission of any such act, although it may well be that from apathy and negligence he allowed injustice to be occasionally perpetrated in his name. He was not highly educated. He rarely, if ever, read a book, but he studied the newspapers; he conversed with all sorts and conditions of men; he was fairly quick in mastering any facts which were explained to him, and in picking up the thread of an argument. From the point of view of intellectual acuteness, he was probably rather above the average of his countrymen. He obtained, not by study but by practical experience in dealing with men and things, a fair education of a nature which is useful to a man occupying a high public position. Like most of his countrymen, he would yield a ready assent to any high-sounding general principle. In practice, he would often fail to see that some action, which it was proposed to take, was at variance with the principle to which he had assented; nevertheless, when the dissonance between the particular act and the principle was brought home to him, he would generally, by some process of reasoning, which would be unfamiliar, if not incomprehensible, to the clear-cut European mind, arrive at the conclusion that the commission of the act was reprehensible. His conduct during the events of 1882 showed that he was not wanting in courage. On the whole, it may be said that, if Tewfik Pasha's virtues were mediocre, his faults were of a venial character. If he excited none of the admiration due to moral greatness or to high intellectual qualities, neither did he excite reprobation by sinking below the moral and intellectual standard of his surroundings. He was morally and intellectually respectable, and, considered as a man rather than as a ruler of men, he met with the qualified commendation which is usually meted out to respectability. His character and conduct were not of a nature to excite enthusiasm on his behalf. On the other hand, they rarely formed the subject of severe condemnation. In the majority of cases which attracted public attention, the faint praise, which is scarcely distinguishable from an implication of blame, was accorded to him. He probably deserved more praise than he ever obtained. He honestly wished to do his duty. He was really interested in the welfare of his subjects, but he was bewildered by the involved nature of his position, and did not see clearly how his duty could best be performed. For this he may be pardoned, more especially when it is remembered that he had no experience of the world outside Egypt. Tewfik Pasha never visited Europe.

If he was not a great man, neither was he an ideal Khedive. If he had been a man of exceptionally firm will, high character, and acute intellect, he would have put himself at the head of the policy of reform in Egypt; he would have asserted his own authority; he would have shown no jealousy of the Englishmen who were employed in his service; he would have co-operated actively with them in the cause of reform, and he would have forced the Egyptians in his service to yield a similar loyal co-operation. Tewfik Pasha did not possess the strength of character to adopt a bold policy of this sort, and perhaps it would have been Utopian to expect that he should have done so.

Although, however, Tewfik Pasha was not an ideal Khedive, nevertheless, looking to all the circumstances of the time, and to the characteristics of Oriental rulers generally, it may be said that he possessed, in a somewhat exceptional degree, many qualities which singularly fitted him to occupy the post he held during the time he held it. Under the régime of a fanatical Moslem, or of a man of arbitrary temperament and despotic tendencies, or of a feeble voluptuary indifferent to everything which did not minister to his own pleasures—all types which are common in the history of Oriental countries—the difficulties in the way of launching Egypt on the path of progress would have been greatly increased. Tewfik Pasha possessed the negative virtue that he answered to none of these descriptions, and, under the circumstances, this was a virtue of incalculable value. But he possessed more than negative virtues. He could lay claim to some good qualities of a positive character. If he did not take any active part in initiating reforms, he was content that others should do so for him. If he could not lead the reformers, he had no objection to following their lead. If he did not afford any very active assistance to the small band of Englishmen who were laying the foundations of a prosperous future for Egypt, neither did he interfere actively to place obstacles in their path; indeed, he often used his influence to remove obstacles. His position was one of great difficulty. On the one hand, it was dangerous to oppose the English, and, moreover, he was sufficiently intelligent to see that it was contrary to his own interests and to those of his country to do so. On the other hand, if he threw himself into the arms of the English, he was sure to lose popularity amongst certain influential sections of his own countrymen. The natural result was that Tewfik Pasha developed a considerable talent for trimming. The circumstances of the time were, indeed, such that he could scarcely with prudence adopt any other line of policy; and, as a trimmer, he played his part remarkably well. He afforded an admirable link between the Englishman and the Egyptian, and he often performed useful work in moderating the views of either side. In the performance of this task, he naturally came in for a good deal of criticism from both quarters. He might often have said:

In moderation placing all my glory,
While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.

Moreover, Tewfik Pasha possessed another very valuable quality. He knew his country and his countrymen well. It was not in vain that Arábi had marched with horse, foot, and artillery into the square of Abdin Palace, and had imposed his will on his reluctant Sovereign. It was not in vain that he had listened to the inflated rubbish talked by would-be patriots about free institutions, which were uncongenial to the soil of Egypt. He had laid these matters to heart. He knew the ignorance and credulity of the mass of the population. He recognised the danger of fanning the smouldering embers of Moslem fanaticism. He appreciated the difficulties of his position, and he knew that if he did not lean on the strong arm of England, many of those who knelt at his feet would be ready, should the occasion arise and should they see their own profit in doing so, to turn on him and rend him. He was deeply impressed with the fact that he owed his position to British interference. He recognised his weakness, and he knew that, should he ever incur the serious displeasure of England, that two-handed engine at the door, in the shape of the British fleet and the British army, stood ready to strike once and strike no more. Thus, though he would coquette with those who urged him to oppose the English, he never allowed himself to be pushed too far in this direction. I once had to remind him that Ismail Pasha was on the shores of the Bosphorus, and that his return to Cairo was not altogether outside the verge of practical politics, upon which Tewfik Pasha made the significant remark: "Un Ministre on peut toujours changer, mais le Khédive—c'est autre chose." A change of Ministry shortly afterwards occurred, for Tewfik Pasha was wise enough never to identify himself fully with the policy of any Minister. He knew that a change of Ministry was an admirable political safety-valve, and when he felt his own position in any danger, he very wisely did not hesitate to send a ministerial scapegoat into the wilderness.

I bear Tewfik's name in kindly and respectful remembrance, for though I daresay he winced under the pressure, which I occasionally brought to bear on him, my relations with him were very pleasant and friendly, neither did they in any way redound to his discredit. The idea, which under the influence of the Anglophobe party took some root in Egypt, to the effect that he was a mere tool in my hands, is wholly untrue and most unjust to his memory. I used to discuss matters with him. When any difference of opinion occurred, I yielded to him quite as often—indeed, I think more often—than he yielded to me. We generally came to some equitable compromise between our conflicting views.

When he died, he was just beginning to reap the fruits of the reforming policy. He had become popular by reason of the reforms, although, as a matter of fact, he had not taken any leading part in effecting them. He acquiesced in them of his own free will, but sometimes with an unwilling mind,—*ἑκὼν ἀέκοντί γε θυμῷ.* His death was a great loss to Egypt. Whatever may have been his faults, he deserves a somewhat prominent niche in the Valhalla of Oriental potentates. Posterity will be unjust if they forget that it was during the reign of Tewfik Pasha that Egypt was first started on the road to prosperity, and that he took not, indeed, the most leading part in the rehabilitation of his country, but still a part of which his descendants may well be proud; for, without his abstention from opposition, and without his support, albeit it was at times rather lukewarm, the efforts of the British reformer would have been far less productive of result than has actually been the case. Had he been a man of stronger character and more marked individuality, it is possible that his country would have progressed less rapidly. He should be remembered as the Khedive who allowed Egypt to be reformed in spite of the Egyptians.

The leading personage in the Egyptian political world is the Khedive. The Prime Minister, however, also occupies a position of great importance. After the bombardment of Alexandria in

1882, Chérif Pasha was named to this office. In January 1884, he was succeeded by Nubar Pasha, who remained in office till June 1888. On Nubar Pasha's fall, Riaz Pasha became Prime Minister. His Ministry lasted till May 1891. His successor was Mustapha Pasha Fehmi. On January 7, 1892, Tewfik Pasha died. His son and successor, Abbas Pasha, kept Mustapha Pasha Fehmi in office till January 1893, when he was succeeded by Riaz Pasha, who, again, in April 1894, was succeeded by Nubar Pasha. In the autumn of 1895, Nubar Pasha's failing health obliged him to quit office. He was succeeded by Mustapha Pasha Fehmi.

Of Chérif Pasha little need be said. He was a Minister of the pre-occupation days rather than of the occupation. His character is almost sufficiently described in the narrative given in a previous portion of this work. To what has been already said it is only necessary to add that Chérif Pasha was the least Egyptian of any of the Moslem Prime Ministers of recent times. He was a pure Turk who, in early life, had come from Constantinople. The ordinary Turco-Egyptian is generally more Egyptian than Turk. Chérif Pasha, on the other hand, was a Turco-Egyptian in the first stage of Egyptianisation. It is true that he favoured Egyptian semi-autonomy, and that he viewed with dislike any increased interference by the Sultan in Egyptian affairs; but he was out of sympathy with the pure Egyptians, whom he regarded as a conquered race; he was, in fact, the incarnation of the policy of "Egypt for the Turco-Egyptians." Whatever was not Turkish in his character, was French. He had assimilated a good deal of the *bonhomie* which sometimes, and of the keen sense of the ridiculous which more frequently is to be found amongst the French, but he never lost the predominant characteristics of a Turkish aristocrat. He was proud, courageous, honest after his way, and, in his public life, always negligent of detail and sometimes of principle. Occasionally, he would emit flashes of true statesmanship, but he was too careless, too apathetic, and too wanting in persistence to carry out his own principles in practice. With all his faults, he was, on the whole, one of the most sympathetic figures on the political stage of Egypt during recent times.

Nubar Pasha was by far the most interesting of latter-day Egyptian politicians. Intellectually, he towered above his competitors. Bearing in mind, however, the intellectual calibre of those competitors, he deserves more than such faint praise as this. He was, indeed, a bad administrator, and this defect detracted from his political usefulness, more especially by reason of the fact that, according to his own admission,[1] Egypt stood in need of administrators rather than of statesmen. Nevertheless, even in Egypt some statesmanlike qualities are demanded from those who are at the head of affairs, and Nubar Pasha could unquestionably lay claim to the possession of qualities, which can be characterised as statesmanlike.

He was a thorough Oriental, but, unlike many Orientals, his foreign education had not resulted in his assimilating the bad and discarding the more worthy portions of European civilisation. He was far too great a man to be attracted by all the flimsy tinsel and moral obliquity which lie on the surface of European civilisation, that is to say, the civilisation of the Paris Boulevards, whose principal apostles are usually European or Levantine adventurers. He saw all these things, but unlike the Gallicised Egyptian, who is too often lured to his moral destruction by them, the only effect which they produced on his more elevated mind was to make him ask himself—how can I protect my country of adoption against the inroads of the quick-witted but unscrupulous European? It is clear that Egypt is to be Europeanised; how can this process best be effected?

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 262.

The answer which Nubar Pasha gave to these questions was worthy of a statesman. He rightly differentiated the divergences between Eastern and Western systems of government. Personal rule, he said to himself, must give way before a reign of law. The Egyptians must learn from Europe how to protect themselves both against the arbitrary caprices of their rulers, and against the advancing and somewhat turbid tide of Europeans with whom they are destined to be associated. They can only do so by assimilating that respect for the law which forms the keystone of the arch on which European systems of government rest. It cannot be contended that this idea was very original, or that any great mental effort was required for its conception. But to Nubar Pasha belongs the credit that he was the first Egyptian statesman who conceived it, or, at all events, who endeavoured to carry it into practice. Whatever may have been the blemishes in Nubar Pasha's character, and whatever may be the defects in the judicial institutions which he created, it should never be forgotten that he first endeavoured to bring home to the Egyptian governing class and to the Egyptian people that, whereas might, whether in the person of despotic Khedives or dictatorial diplomatists, had heretofore been right in Egypt, the foundation of good government in any community pretending to call itself civilised is that the maxim should be reversed, and that might should yield to right.

Nubar Pasha had, therefore, no difficulty in grasping a European principle. Indeed, the wider the principle, the more readily he grasped it, for he dearly loved dealing in generalities. His defect was that, having once got hold of a sound principle, he would not unfrequently ride it to death. He did not sufficiently adapt it to the circumstances with which he had to deal. Or, again, he would sometimes think that, having enunciated the principle, he had done all that was required of him. He rarely endeavoured to acquaint himself thoroughly with facts, or to see that the practice was made to conform with the principle which he had adopted. Moreover, he would sometimes readily assent to some wide general principle without any serious intention of applying it at all, and he was led to do this all the more because his subtle intellect was not slow to perceive that Europeans, and especially Englishmen, are liable to be soothed by plausible, albeit often fallacious generalities.

Nubar Pasha was a brilliant conversationalist. He possessed a marvellous power of imparting a character of perfect verisimilitude to the series of half-truths, bordering on fiction, which he was wont to pour into the ears of his interested listener. The educated European was struck by his apparently wide grasp and bold generalisations, the fallacies of which could often only be detected by those who had a perfect acquaintance with the facts. The European would readily fall a victim to the fascinating manners, the graceful diction, the subtle reasoning, and deferential deportment, which distinguish the peculiar type of Oriental of whom Nubar Pasha was perhaps the most typical representative. It was only after experience and reflection that he would perceive that, the premises being incorrect, the conclusions of his teacher in Egyptian affairs were often erroneous, and that the broad enunciations of principle with which he had been charmed were intended more for academic discussion in the closet than for practical decision in the Council Chamber.

Nubar Pasha's readiness, his versatility, the audacity with which he would defend the most glaring fallacies, and his great command of language, acquired for him some reputation as a diplomatist. To a certain extent, this reputation was well deserved. On many occasions, he showed himself to be a skilful negotiator. He was especially skilful in throwing a cloud of ambiguity over his meaning and his intentions. He was a master of the French language, and one of the peculiarities of that language is that, although it is eminently precise when the writer or speaker wishes to give precision to his thoughts, on the other hand, it is full of ambiguous expressions, which afford a powerful help to a diplomatist who wishes to leave open some back door through which to retreat from the engagements which he is apparently taking, and this was not unfrequently Nubar Pasha's case. He would probably have been more successful as a diplomatist in the eighteenth than in the nineteenth century. Modern diplomacy is not mere jugglery, neither is the most successful diplomatist he who can best throw dust in the eyes of his opponent. Under the influence of publicity, and perhaps to some extent of Prince Bismarck, the whole art, if diplomacy can be dignified by such a name, has been simplified; perhaps some, including Nubar Pasha himself, would say that it has been brutalised. The affairs between nation and nation are now conducted on more business-like principles than heretofore. A plain answer is required to a plain question, and although some tricks of the trade still survive, they are, by comparison with the past, of little practical utility. It was Nubar Pasha's misfortune that, during the latter part of his career, he had to deal principally with a European nation whose members are distinguished for their straightforward mode of conducting business. In a way, he understood the English character. He once made a significant and characteristic remark. "L'Anglais," he said, "est très naïf, mais lorsqu'on pense qu'on l'a trompé, tout d'un coup il se tourne et il vous flanque un terrible coup de pied quelque part." But although he knew that intrigue was of little real use against the Englishman, he could not resist the temptation of intriguing. He could not abandon his favourite weapon of offence and defence. The natural result ensued. In spite of his real talents, his suavity, his earnest devotion to civilised principles of government, and his profuse professions of friendship and esteem, he inspired but little confidence amongst those Englishmen with whom he was brought in contact. They mistrusted him, perhaps more than he deserved to be mistrusted. He could never understand the feelings which his behaviour excited in the minds of Englishmen. He went to his grave with a hardy and unimpaired belief in the political virtues of finesse bordering on duplicity.

Nubar Pasha's political views during the early period of the British occupation of Egypt were characteristic. He was in favour of the occupation. He saw that a British garrison was necessary to maintain order. "If," he frequently said, "the British troops are withdrawn, I shall leave Egypt with the last battalion." But, on the other hand, he was opposed to what he termed the "administrative occupation." In other words, what he wanted was a military force, in whom perfect reliance could be placed, to keep him in power, whilst he was to be allowed a free hand in everything connected with the civil administration of the country. Hence his extreme civility to all British military officers, whose praises he was never weary of singing. What, indeed, for all the purposes which he had at heart, could be more perfect than the presence in Egypt of a thoroughly disciplined force, commanded by young men who took no interest in local politics, and who occupied themselves exclusively with polo and cricket? Hence, also, his constant opposition during his first period of office (1884-88) to the British civilians in the Egyptian service and to myself, as the British diplomatic representative who supported them. Our action jarred terribly with the Nubarian programme. It is strange that a really able man, such as Nubar Pasha, should have thought his programme capable of realisation, and that he should not have seen the impossibility of the British Government looking on as passive spectators whilst a British force was in Egypt, and allowing the maladministration of the Egyptian Pashas to remain practically unchecked. And this would certainly have been the result of acquiescence in Nubar Pasha's system of government.[1]

With any ordinary degree of prudence, Nubar Pasha could have remained Prime Minister for an indefinite period, and it is a pity that he did not do so, for his talents were far superior to those of his competitors. His fall in 1888 came about in this fashion. For some four years, I got on fairly well with him. On many occasions, I afforded him strong support. I shut my eyes to a good deal of intrigue, which I knew was going on around me. In an evil moment for himself, Nubar

---

[1] In illustration of the truth of this remark, I may refer to what happened about the Commissions of Brigandage (*vide ante,* p. 289 and *infra,* p. 405).

Pasha went to England. He had an interview with Lord Salisbury at which I was present. To my surprise, for he had not given me any warning of his intentions, he burst out into a violent tirade against the British officials in Egypt in general, and against Sir Edgar Vincent and myself in particular. All this produced very little effect on Lord Salisbury, but the ultimate result—for this was only the beginning of a breach which subsequently widened — was such as Nubar Pasha hardly anticipated. He thought he was doing a clever stroke of business. What he really did was to bring about his own downfall. He thought to pose as the defender of Egyptian rights against British aggression, and thus to mitigate the prejudices entertained against him by the Mohammedan population by reason of his race and creed. What he really did was to open the mouths of all his numerous enemies in Egypt, who had only remained silent because they thought that, strong in the support of England, his position was unassailable. Nubar Pasha failed to see that which was apparent to others possessed of none of his intellectual subtlety, namely, that the English were his natural allies, and that directly he broke up the alliance his fall was inevitable. When once it became apparent that he could no longer rely on British support, Tewfik Pasha seized on some trivial pretext for dismissing him.[1]

---

[1] I did nothing to hasten the downfall of Nubar Pasha. The European situation was at that time (1888) somewhat critical. Lord Salisbury, who was then in office, was, therefore, rather desirous of postponing any crisis in Egyptian affairs. On February 17, 1888, he wrote to me: "I have asked you by telegraph to try and manage to postpone any breach with Nubar to a more convenient season. . . . I believe you are right in this controversy, but if I thought you wrong, I should still think it impossible to retreat before Nubar in the face of the whole East. It is not, therefore, from any doubt about supporting you that I urge you to keep the peace for the present, but because I do not wish our administration in Egypt to be the cause to which the long European war is to be ascribed by the future historian."

I really believe that I regretted Nubar Pasha's fall more than he did himself. His Protean changes, his emotional character, and his ignorance of the rudiments of many of the administrative questions with which he had to deal, were at times exasperating. Nevertheless, I could not help liking him. It was pleasant to have to deal with a man of real ability, who could converse rationally and who, if he did not understand much which should be familiar to any politician and administrator, could at all events grasp the main lines of action which should guide the Government of a civilised community. Moreover, there was an indescribable charm about Nubar Pasha which was almost irresistible. I have never known any one more persuasive, or more skilled in the art of making the worse appear the better reason. I used often to half believe him, when I knew full well that he was trying to dupe me. I felt towards him much what Shakespeare felt towards his faithless mistress :—

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies.

I admired his talents, and I never could forget that, in spite of his defects, he possessed some unquestionably statesmanlike qualities. If he had only recognised the fact that in the government of the world mere intellectual gifts are not all-powerful, and that high character and reputation also exercise a potent influence over mankind, he would have been a really great man.

I find some difficulty in writing about Riaz Pasha, not only because, I am glad to say (1907), he is still living, but also because he is a personal friend for whom I entertain the highest regard and esteem. I may say, however, that Nubar Pasha and Riaz Pasha were the Egyptian representatives of two widely different schools of political and social thought. Nubar Pasha recognised the fact that there was only one true civilisation in the world, and that was the civilisation of Europe. Accordingly, he set to work to Europeanise the main framework of Egyptian institutions by means which were sometimes wise, and sometimes, possibly, the reverse, but he never entertained any doubt as to the nature of the object to be attained. Riaz Pasha, on the other hand, represented the apotheosis of Islamism. Why, he thought, should not the *Saturnia regna*, when Moslems were really great, return? He would barely recognise the necessity of the least European assistance in the process of Egyptian regeneration. "Seul," he said to himself, "je ferai le bonheur de mon peuple." He held that Mohammedans and Mohammedanism contain within themselves all that is needed for their own regeneration. It would be both unjust and ungenerous not to extend some sympathy to views of this sort. It would be too much to expect that a fervid Moslem and a sincere Egyptian patriot—and Riaz Pasha answers both of these descriptions—should readily accept the facts, which are almost certainly true, namely, that Islamism as a social and political system—though not as a religion—is moribund, that the judicial and administrative procedures common amongst Moslems are so closely interwoven with their religion as to be almost inseparable the one from the other, and that for many a long year to come the Egyptians will be incapable of governing themselves on civilised principles.

Riaz Pasha's political life may be divided into four different phases: first, as a Minister and as a Commissioner of Inquiry under Ismail Pasha; secondly, as Prime Minister under Tewfik Pasha during the period of the Anglo-French Control; thirdly, as Prime Minister under Tewfik Pasha during the time of the British occupation; and, fourthly, as Prime Minister under Abbas II.

He appeared to most advantage in the first phase. He was indignant at the ruin which Ismail Pasha brought on his country. He stood out boldly as a reformer at a time when a reforming Egyptian could not state his true opinions without risk to his life and property. Whatever faults Riaz Pasha may have subsequently committed, it should never be forgotten that during this phase of his career he showed a great deal of real courage and foresight.[1]

In the early portions of the second phase, that is to say, the period of the Anglo-French Control, Riaz Pasha also showed to advantage. He was placed in such a position that his dislike to European interference was of necessity tempered by the consideration that the Europeans, with whom he was principally associated, were very useful. The Controllers stood between him and the hungry creditors of the Egyptian Government, and Riaz Pasha was aware that he did not possess sufficient technical knowledge to evolve order out of the existing financial chaos without European assistance. During the later portion of the Control period, he had to deal with a question which possibly required higher qualities, and a greater degree of political insight, than any that he possessed. He was swept off his legs by the Arábi movement, of which he failed to see the importance until too late.

The third phase of Riaz Pasha's political career was when, in succession to Nubar Pasha, he was made Prime Minister by Tewfik during the period of the British occupation. At first matters went fairly well. Riaz had some advantages over Nubar Pasha. He was by far the better administrator of the two. He knew Egypt well; he was himself a first-rate practical agriculturist, and could discuss all matters bearing on the condition of the agricultural classes with a thorough knowledge of his subject. He exercised great authority over the Egyptian officials. The fact that a devout Mohammedan was at the head of affairs produced a tranquillising effect on Mohammedan public opinion. On the other hand, he was too inelastic to manage so delicate a machine as the government of Egypt during the occupation period. He did not altogether appreciate the change which time and the political situation of the day had effected in the system of governing the country. He failed to see that, under a reign of law, he could not always have his own way, for Riaz Pasha, although he had a certain rough idea of justice, had but little respect for the law. He thought that when laws or regulations clashed with his ideas of what was right and wrong, they should be broken. The result of his peculiar temperament and habits of thought was that, after a while, he quarrelled with almost every one, European and Egyptian, and produced a state of administrative friction, which rendered his retirement from office inevitable.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* vol. i. p. 45.

The fourth phase of Riaz's career was when he was Minister under Abbas II.—a period with the history of which I am not attempting to deal in the present work.

To sum up, Riaz Pasha is a staunch Moslem, possessed of intellectual qualities which are certainly equal, and of moral qualities which are decidedly superior to those of the class to which he belongs. Notably, his physical and moral fearlessness deserve high commendation. It were well for the cause of Egyptian patriotism, if there were more patriots endowed with the sterling qualities which are conspicuous in Riaz Pasha's rugged, yet very sympathetic character.

The simplicity of Mustapha Pasha Fehmi's character renders it unnecessary to allude to him at any length. Loyal, thoroughly honest, truthful, and courteous, he possesses all the qualities which Englishmen usually associate with the word gentleman. He has been statesmanlike enough to see that the interests of his country would best be served by working loyally with the British officials, instead of opposing them. During his tenure of office, Egypt has made greater progress, both moral and material, than at any previous period.

Having now described the machinery of the Government, and the principal individuals who were entrusted with its working, it would appear logical to deal with the work which the machine produced. Before, however, describing what the English did in Egypt, it will be as well to say something of what they wished to do. The next chapters will, therefore, be devoted to describing that strange phantom which, under the name of British Policy in Egypt, was constantly eluding the grasp both of those to whom it owed its being and of others who endeavoured, from time to time, to understand its true significance. It was not until 1904 that this phantom disappeared, and that a more substantial political creation was substituted in its place.

# PART V

# BRITISH POLICY IN EGYPT

*We trust it may be granted to us to labour for maintaining the interests of the Empire, for promoting the welfare of the Egyptian people, and for doing honest work towards the establishment of the peace and order of the world.*

*Speech of* Mr. Gladstone *in the House of Commons, July* 27, 1882.

# CHAPTER XLIV

## THE STRUGGLE FOR A POLICY

1882–1883

**Intentions of the British Government—Proposal to reduce the garrison—Sir Edward Malet's opinion—Difficulty of combining reform and evacuation—I recommend reduction and concentration at Alexandria—The Government approve of this recommendation—The reduction is countermanded.**

It is probable that, if any one had told Lord Granville on the morrow of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir that twenty-five years later a British force would still be garrisoned in Egypt, and that for twenty-two out of those twenty-five years the Egyptian question, in its political aspects, would remain unsettled, he would have ridiculed the idea. For, in truth, in 1882 the British Government had a tolerably clear policy. Its execution was very difficult, but at the time the difficulties did not appear absolutely insurmountable. Their policy was to restore order, to introduce some elementary reforms, and then to withdraw the British troops. The sound of the guns at Tel-el-Kebir had scarcely died away, when Lord Granville requested Sir Edward Malet to send "as soon as possible, suggestions as to the army, finances, and the administration for the future." At that time, "Her Majesty's Government contemplated shortly commencing the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt."

During the summer of 1883, the British force numbered about 7000 men. On August 25, 1883, Chérif Pasha addressed a Memorandum to Sir Edward Malet urging, on grounds of economy, that the force should be reduced to 2000 men. Sir Edward Malet agreed that there could be no doubt as to the necessity of economy. "The question," he added, "which unfortunately presents itself, and to which there can be no decisive answer, is whether the existing tranquillity is not mainly due to the presence of the troops." He was unable to recommend so large a reduction as that proposed by Chérif Pasha. "An immediate reduction of 2000 men was," he thought, "the most that should be effected."

On September 6, Lord Granville wrote me a despatch, which reached Cairo simultaneously with my arrival from India. In this despatch, after alluding to Sir Edward Malet's communication, which is quoted above, he went on to say:—

"Her Majesty's Government entirely concur in the desire to reduce the force as far as is consistent with the preservation of public order, but they have been unwilling to take any fresh step for the purpose until they could have the advantage of your opinion. Sir Evelyn Wood has expressed to me personally his belief that the British garrison might be entirely withdrawn from Cairo without disadvantage. The number of troops to be retained elsewhere and their disposition, would be matter for careful consideration. I have to request that you will consult the military authorities, and report fully to me on the subject."

From recollection, and from a perusal of contemporaneous despatches and private letters, I am able to give an accurate account of my frame of mind at this time. I was deeply penetrated with the importance of the step taken by the British Government in sending a military force to Egypt, and I doubted whether the Ministers themselves fully realised its gravity. They saw, indeed, the obvious objections to a permanent occupation of Egypt; they held to the broad lines of Lord Palmerston's policy;[1] but they underrated the difficulties of getting out of the country. Nevertheless, all history was there to prove that when once a civilised Power lays its hand on a weak State in a barbarous or semi-civilised condition, it rarely relaxes its grasp. I was in favour of the policy of evacuation, and I saw that, if the British troops were to be withdrawn, no long delay should be allowed to ensue; otherwise, the occupation might drift insensibly into a condition of permanency. Total and immediate evacuation was, indeed, impossible for the reason given by Sir Edward Malet, that is to say, that by the adoption of such a measure, public tranquillity would be endangered. But although the maintenance of public tranquillity stood first in the order of importance, the question of the withdrawal of the garrison could not be decided with reference to a consideration of this point alone. The question had to be considered in another aspect. What would be the effect of the withdrawal on the future of the country? What prospect was there of Lord Dufferin's programme being carried out if the British troops were withdrawn? I did not see so clearly as at a later period that the alternative policies of reform and evacuation were absolutely irreconcilable, but I had some fairly clear perception of the fact. I saw that the system of government in Egypt had been shaken to its base, and that, if once the British troops were withdrawn, it would be necessary to leave to the Khedive a tolerably free hand in the government of the country. I saw more especially that the Egyptian Government should be allowed full freedom in the direction of suppressing any attempt to disturb public tranquillity. What at the time I most feared was that the British Government, under the influence of public opinion in England, would first withdraw their troops and then cry out if the use of the courbash increased, and, generally, if the rough-and-ready means dear to the hearts of Oriental rulers were employed for the maintenance of public order. I wished to warn the Government that if they decided on a policy of evacuation, they must be prepared to turn a deaf ear to the cries, which would, without doubt, be raised both in Parliament and in the press, when the Egyptian Government proceeded to govern according to their own lights.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* vol. i. p. 92.

It was with these feelings uppermost in my mind that on October 9, that is to say, about a month after my arrival in Cairo, I answered the question which Lord Granville had addressed to me on September 6. I began by stating that, after consultation with Sir Frederick Stephenson, I had come to the conclusion that the British garrison could safely be withdrawn from Cairo, and that the total force in Egypt might be reduced to about 3000 men, who should be concentrated at Alexandria. I did not express any opinion on the question of when it would be possible to withdraw the whole of the garrison, but in a private telegram to Lord Granville, dated October 8, I told him that "for the present there could be no question of total withdrawal from Egypt." I dwelt at some length on the state of the country, and, writing with a view to ultimate publication, I indicated in a manner which was sufficiently clear that, if the Egyptian Government were to be left to themselves, they must be allowed to maintain order in their own way.

When my despatch reached London, it created a considerable stir in official circles. It became apparent that, although perhaps the Ministers were themselves aware that they could not attain two irreconcilable objects, they thought it undesirable to place this view of the case before the public. Lord Granville telegraphed to me asking that my despatch should be divided into two, and that the portion which spoke of non-interference with vigorous measures after the withdrawal of the British garrison should be treated separately and confidentially.

I accordingly wrote two despatches. The first, which was very short, dealt with the proposed reduction of the garrison and the withdrawal of the troops from Cairo. This was published.[1] The second, which was longer, dealt with the probable consequences of withdrawal. This was not published. It is, from a historical point of view, a document of some interest. It is reproduced in an Appendix to this chapter.

On November 1, Lord Granville wrote to me that the British Government approved of my recommendation that the British force in Egypt should be reduced to 3000 men, who were to be concentrated at Alexandria. "The British garrison being thus withdrawn from Cairo," it was added, "the main responsibility for preserving order throughout Egypt will, as you point out, devolve upon the Government of the Khedive, and in the execution of that task they may rely upon the full moral support of Her Majesty's Government."

Three weeks later, and before any practical steps had been taken to withdraw the garrison from Cairo, news arrived of the annihilation of General Hicks's army. Lord Granville telegraphed on November 22 directing me, after consultation with Sir Frederick Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood, to state my opinion as to whether the existing state of affairs in the Soudan was a cause of danger to Egypt. In that case, I was requested to state my views as to what measures were desirable. In my reply, dated November 24, I said that Sir Frederick Stephenson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and myself were of opinion that "the recent success of the Mahdi was a source of danger to Egypt," that the withdrawal of the garrison from Cairo should be postponed, and that for the time being no reduction should be made in the strength of the British force. On November 25, Lord Granville telegraphed that "the preliminary steps for the withdrawal of the British troops were to be postponed." The postponement has lasted until the day on which I am writing.

---

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1884, pp. 50-51.

It will be observed that during all this time there was no question of total and immediate evacuation. Every responsible authority on the spot was opposed to any such measure, and the Government, although anxious to withdraw entirely, saw that it was impossible to carry the policy of total withdrawal into execution at once. The only question under discussion was whether the garrison should be reduced and the British force concentrated at Alexandria with a view to eventual withdrawal at no remote period. It may be doubted whether, even if the Hicks disaster had not occurred, it would have been possible within a short while to have withdrawn the whole of the British troops. This, however, is mere conjecture. What is more certain is that, when the military power of Egypt in the Soudan was crushed, the last chance of immediate, or nearly immediate, evacuation disappeared. Moreover, it is historically interesting to note that the deathblow to the policy of speedy evacuation was dealt by a statesman who was earnestly desirous to withdraw the British troops. If Lord Granville had not been so fearful of incurring any responsibility in respect to the Soudan on the ground that, in doing so, he might prolong the British occupation of Egypt, and if he had placed a veto on the Hicks expedition, it is conceivable that the British garrison might have been withdrawn after a short time. As it was, Lord Granville, in his desire to shorten the occupation, contributed by his action to its prolongation.

Before leaving this branch of my subject, I should mention that on October 28, that is, between the time when I recommended the concentration at Alexandria, and the arrival of the news of the Hicks disaster, I again urged on Lord Granville, in a private letter, the impossibility of reconciling the two policies of speedy evacuation and reform. I reproduce the whole of this letter. It was as follows:—

"I have now been here long enough to take stock of the main elements of the situation. There is an immense deal to be done, and there are many difficult questions to be solved. Looking at these questions from the point of view of their intrinsic merits, there is no reason why most of them, at all events, should not be solved within a reasonable period. But there is one obstacle which stands in the way of almost every move forward, and that is the necessity of consulting every Power in Europe before any important steps can be taken.

"To take a single instance, the Blue Book on the appointment of the Indemnity Commission last year is a positive curiosity in its way. This question was so simple that three or four people sitting round a table ought to have been able to settle it in half an hour. Yet a voluminous correspondence ensued, and endless delays occurred before Stockholm, Brussels, etc., could be got to agree.

"As matters stand, it will be scarcely possible to carry out the whole of our programme. On the one hand, we are bound before we go to start Egypt on the high road to good government. We ought not to leave the Egyptian Government in such a position as that they may plead as an excuse for future bad government that their hands are so tied as to render them powerless to execute reforms. On the other hand, we must not, for European, Egyptian, and purely English reasons, stay too long.

"Under present conditions, it is scarcely conceivable that both of these objects should be attained. In fact, the one is almost a contradiction in terms to the other. If we are to wait until all the essential reforms have been carried out by the slow process of consulting each Power separately on every question of detail, we shall wait a very long time, and there will be danger of drifting into a policy of annexation, or something tantamount to it.

"If we cut the knot by withdrawing without having done our work, and leaving Egypt to stew in its own juice of administrative, financial, and economic anarchy, there will be a very considerable risk that something will occur before our backs have long been turned, which will raise up the whole Egyptian question again. I confess I do not see my way out of this dilemma.

"We may, indeed, before long retire without any absolute danger to public order and tranquillity in the immediate future. But surely more than this is, under all the circumstances, expected of us both by Europe and by English public opinion. If we leave a crop of unsettled burning questions behind us, we can never feel any confidence that our hands will not be forced, that is to say, that we may again find ourselves in the position of being obliged to interfere or stand aside whilst others, probably the French, take up the work which we, as it would then appear, had failed to accomplish.

"Getting out of Egypt is a very different problem from getting out of Afghanistan. In the latter case, we had to deal with a country in whose internal administration no one but the Afghans was, to any very considerable extent, concerned. There was no very great difficulty in leaving this quasi-barbarous people to be governed after their own fashion by their quasi-barbarous Governors. Here the foundations of the edifice, which are to be found in the moral and material condition of the people, are scarcely less barbarous than in Afghanistan. But, on these foundations is built a top-heavy and exotic superstructure, such as an enormous external debt, Western law-courts, complete liberty of contract, and, in fact, all the paraphernalia of European civilisation with some of its worst and not many of its best features. I do not suppose that Europe will stand by and let this superstructure fall to pieces.

"We are making very fair progress in all matters which fall within the competence of the Egyptian Government, such as prison reform, local tribunals, etc.

"But as regards international subjects—and all the most important subjects are international—we are almost at an absolute standstill.

"In spite of every effort, we have not yet succeeded in getting the house tax through. After the house tax, comes the professional tax and the stamp duty, each with its own peculiar difficulties.

"The reforms in the Mixed Tribunals and the abolition of the Consular jurisdiction in criminal cases, will probably involve interminable negotiations.

"Then there is the great question of the Law of Liquidation, with all its attendant political difficulties. There is not, I fear, the least chance of our being able to regulate the financial situation without modifying that law. I thought at one time we might manage to arrange matters by getting the consent of the Commissioners of the Debt, but the political objections to the adoption of this course are scarcely less great than if we tried to get the Powers to consent to alter the law itself.

"The question of the debts of the fellaheen cannot be settled without going to the Powers, for whatever is done will almost certainly involve some changes in the code administered by the Mixed Tribunals.[1]

"There are several questions connected with the Daira Sanieh and the Domains which ought to be settled, but here again the international difficulty bars the way.

"Even some subjects which have no direct international character, depend indirectly upon the concord of the Powers. Thus, a considerable capital expenditure on irrigation is almost a necessity; so also is the Soudan Railway. But for both of these money is wanted, and it will be very difficult to find any money until the financial situation is placed on a sound footing.

"You may well ask me why I say all this, which you already know. My reason is to ask you to consider whether it is not possible to apply some remedy to this state of things. Would it not be possible to issue a Circular to the Powers explaining our difficulties, and saying that we did not propose to consult them any more on each detail, but that, when we had put matters straight, we should ask them to accept the settlement *en bloc*, and that we should then at once withdraw our troops?

---

[1] This question was, many years subsequently, settled without reference to the Powers. An Agricultural Bank was established (see p. 452). In 1883, it would have been scarcely possible to have called such an institution into existence.

"Give me 2000 men and power to settle matters between the English and Egyptian Governments, and I will guarantee that in twelve months there shall not be a British soldier in Egypt, and that the country is put in such a position as to render it very improbable that any Egyptian question will be raised again for many years to come at all events.[1] But if we adhere to our present procedure, I really despair of doing much within any reasonable time—I mean, of course, as regards international questions. As regards purely Egyptian questions, there are plenty of difficulties, but they are not insurmountable.

"I put forward this suggestion with much hesitation. I am aware that the matter cannot be regarded wholly from the point of view of Egyptian internal reform. The general political situation has to be considered, and from this point of view there may be insuperable obstacles to the adoption of any course such as that which I suggest. Anyhow, I think it right to submit to you the aspect of the case which I have set forth in this letter. Your wider knowledge and experience may possibly be able to hit upon some other plan superior to my—possibly crude—suggestion.

"I may add that I am confident that I could, by developing the arguments I have briefly stated here, make out a very strong case for taking a new point of departure, but it would, of course, be useless for me to write a public despatch in this sense, unless I thought that some practical good might come out of it."

In other words, what I proposed amounted to the temporary assumption on the part of England of the task of governing Egypt. On November 9,

---

[1] This forecast of what was possible was unquestionably much too sanguine.

Lord Granville acknowledged the receipt of this letter. "It would require," he said, "some time to consider and answer your powerful but gloomy view of the situation in Egypt. I am afraid the remedy you suggest is too drastic, but I will reflect over what you say, and let you know my impressions, and those of others. I have escaped the Lord Mayor's dinner. Gladstone will speak shortly, and will only deal with generalities on Egyptian questions."

On November 14, Lord Granville again wrote to me as follows: "I go to Stratton[1] on Saturday, when I hope to talk over with Gladstone and Northbrook your very important letter of, I think, the 24th October. I hope you will think what Gladstone said in concert with me about Egypt at the Mansion House was harmless."

Finally, on November 30, Lord Granville wrote: "I have talked over your views on the Liquidation Law with Gladstone and with Northbrook. We do not see our way to acting *en bloc*, but it might be possible, particularly after recent events, for you to perfect a scheme on any of the most important subjects, with a view to our getting the consent of the Powers."

This was, of course, tantamount to a rejection of my proposal. I did not for many years make any other having for its object a radical change in the political status of Great Britain in Egypt. Henceforward, I devoted myself entirely to the task of evolving order out of chaos, under such political and administrative conditions as existed at the time when the occupation took place. It was not for some years that I felt at all sanguine of success.

From the time when the orders for concentration at Alexandria were countermanded, all idea of speedy evacuation was abandoned. The attention of the British and Egyptian Governments was for the next two years almost wholly directed to the affairs of the Soudan. During this period, the British officials in Cairo were slowly and laboriously taking some tentative steps in the direction of reducing the Egyptian administrative chaos into order. By the time the Soudan question had passed out of an acute stage, Egypt had been fairly launched on the path of reform. The policy, which as a *pis aller* I had suggested as possible in 1883, of allowing the Khedive and the Turco-Egyptians to govern after their own fashion, had become more than ever difficult of execution, for the country had advanced, whilst the intelligence and governing capacity of the ruling classes had almost stood still. The Turco-Egyptians, who might perhaps have been able to govern the country after a rude fashion in 1883, were incapable of doing so when once the full tide of civilisation had set strongly in. Before long, we had drifted into a position which necessitated the presence of a British garrison, not in order to admit of reforms being initiated and carried out, but in order to prevent a relapse into the confusion which existed in the pre-reforming days. That is the present stage of the Egyptian question.

---

[1] Lord Northbrook's country seat in Hampshire.

Two efforts were made subsequent to 1883, one by Mr. Gladstone's Government, and the other by the Government of Lord Salisbury, to deal with the larger aspects of the Egyptian question. To these reference will now be made.

# APPENDIX

## DESPATCH FROM SIR EVELYN BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE

CAIRO, *October* 9, 1883.

MY LORD—It may be advisable that in a separate despatch I should offer some further observations on the question of the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt beyond those which are contained in my separate despatch of this day's date.[1]

I propose, in the first instance, to make some remarks upon the question of the total withdrawal of the Army of Occupation. The frequent declarations which have been made by Her Majesty's Ministers on this subject, have weakened, but have not altogether eradicated the belief entertained by some sections of the community in Egypt that the country will be permanently occupied by British troops. I have lost no opportunity of stating that there is no intention whatever of departing from the policy in pursuance of which the whole of the British troops will eventually be withdrawn from Egypt. In spite, however, of the very cordial sympathy with which I regard that policy, I regret that I am at present unable to recommend the total withdrawal of the Army of Occupation. I consider that it would be at present premature to discuss the question. Under these circumstances, the only practical questions to be considered are those which are discussed in my separate despatch. In making the proposals contained in that despatch, it may be desirable that I should add some observations of a general nature on the political situation of the moment.

It would be difficult to conceive of the existence of a worse Government than that of the late Khedive, Ismail Pasha. But that Government possessed one single merit—it preserved order. The methods by which it preserved order were cruel and oppressive in the highest degree, but the general result was that life and property were secure from all attacks save those dictated by the action of the Government themselves. Recent events have completely shattered the system of government which prevailed under Ismail Pasha and his predecessors. The use of the "courbash" has been nearly, if not completely, abolished. Measures are being taken under which it may be reasonably hoped that arbitrary arrest and imprisonment will no longer be possible. Properly constituted tribunals are about to be established, under whose jurisdiction it may be hoped that but few persons will suffer for crimes of which they are innocent, although possibly in the first instance some guilty persons may escape punishment. In a word, a reign of law is being introduced.

---

[1] This was the despatch to which allusion is made on pp. 352-353, and in which it was recommended that the British garrison should be reduced and the troops concentrated at Alexandria.

The period of transition from the old to the new order of things would, under any circumstances, have been somewhat critical. It is rendered more so from the fact that recent events must have imbued the people with the idea, heretofore unfamiliar to them, that properly constituted authority may, for a time at least, be successfully resisted.

The present position of the country is that the old order of things has either passed or is rapidly passing away.

On the other hand, the new systems of administration or of judicial procedure are either in process of organisation, or have not yet acquired the stability which time alone can give to them.

I believe His Highness the Khedive and his Ministers to be sincerely desirous of introducing the reforms, whose main features were set forth in Lord Dufferin's report, and of which the country stands so much in need. But the introduction of those reforms must necessarily occupy some time. During the period of their introduction it may be anticipated that many persons, imperfectly appreciating the difficulties of the situation, may be impatient that more rapid progress is not made. On the other hand, the turbulent and lawless portion of the community may not improbably learn to disrespect a Government which does not manifest its authority, or impose its legitimate orders, by the use of those arbitrary methods to which the country has for generations been accustomed. If the system of government in Egypt is to be reformed, it is above all things necessary that order should be preserved during the process of reformation, and that any changes, whether in the existing laws or in the form of government or in the composition of the ministry, should be effected by legal and constitutional methods. Force should be put down by force, and inasmuch as the lesson has scarcely yet been learnt in Egypt that the arm of the law is as strong as that of arbitrary and capricious power, it might, under certain circumstances, become desirable in the interests of the country that a greater degree of severity should be exercised in the suppression of disturbance than would be necessary amongst a population which had for long been accustomed to a law-abiding and orderly system of government.

The main responsibility for preserving order throughout Egypt will, as I have said in my separate despatch, devolve on the Egyptian Government. Under these circumstances, I venture to think that, within any reasonable limits, full freedom should be left to the Egyptian Government in the exercise of that power, the possession of which is a necessary condition to the assumption of responsibility.

I have no reason to suppose that, should any disturbance occur at Cairo or elsewhere, the Egyptian Government would be disposed to use excessive or unnecessary severity in its suppression. The personal character of the Khedive is, indeed, of itself almost a sufficient guarantee that no such tendency exists. At the same time, it cannot be denied that the events of the last few years have shaken the authority of the Government in Egypt, a result which is not, I believe, due to any change in the personal character of the individuals who compose the Government, but to the change of system, which, most fortunately for the country, has been in course of progress since the abdication of Ismail Pasha.

In order to reassert that authority, the existence of which is essential to the progress of orderly reform, it might be deemed necessary by the Egyptian Government to exercise a degree of severity in the suppression of disturbance which might possibly not commend itself to public opinion in England.

Under these circumstances, I venture to think that it would be desirable that both the Egyptian Government and the public in Egypt should fully understand that, whilst Her Majesty's Government would view with serious displeasure any attempt to return to the system of government which prevailed in the past, they would not, save in some very exceptional case, be inclined to interfere with the discretion of the Egyptian Government in the adoption of such measures as the latter might consider desirable for the preservation of public order and tranquillity.

I make these observations not because I have any reason to suppose that any disturbance is likely to ensue upon the partial withdrawal of the British force, but because it appears to me desirable that, before the British garrison is reduced, the responsibility and the power of the Egyptian Government should alike be somewhat clearly defined.

The considerations which I have thus ventured to lay before your Lordship will, of course, apply with even greater force when the time eventually arrives for dealing with the question of the total withdrawal of the British garrison.—I have, etc., E. BARING.

# CHAPTER XLV

## THE NORTHBROOK MISSION

SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 1884

**It is decided to send a Special Commissioner to Cairo—The policy of reporting—Lord Northbrook arrives in Egypt—His financial proposals—His General Report—The Government reject his proposals.**

THE difficulties and complications of the Egyptian question were, of course, greatly increased by the events in the Soudan. Amongst other causes for anxiety, the bankruptcy of the Egyptian Treasury appeared imminent. A Conference of the Powers assembled in London in the summer of 1884 to consider the financial situation, but separated without arriving at any practical conclusions.[1] Under the circumstances, what was a well-intentioned Government, which had drifted into a position which it very imperfectly understood, to do? Undoubtedly, the question was difficult to answer.

After a short period of hesitation, Mr. Gladstone resorted to his favourite device. He determined to send to Cairo a Special Commissioner to "report and advise Her Majesty's Government touching the counsel which it might be fitting to offer the Egyptian Government in the present situation of affairs in Egypt, and as to the measures which should be taken in connection with them." The Commissioner's special attention was to be directed to the "present exigencies of Egyptian finance."

---

[1] Subsequently, some decisions were taken as regards the matters discussed at the Conference. They were embodied in an Agreement signed in London by the representatives of all the Great Powers on March 17, 1885. See *Egypt,* No. 6 of 1885.

There was really little about which to report. The main facts with which the Government had to deal were patent to all the world. Only a year previously, a Special Commissioner of great experience and ability had compiled an elaborate Report on the condition of Egypt. Since then, a detailed Report on the financial situation had been prepared by a Committee of experts sitting in London. The subject had also been thoroughly discussed at the Conference. No further collection of facts was, therefore, required. Any detailed information which might have been necessary before deciding on what policy to adopt, could easily have been furnished by the various authorities on the spot. What was required was the decision of character necessary to arrive at a definite conclusion, when once the facts had been collected.

Lord Northbrook was designated as the Special Commissioner. A better choice could not have been made. His high character, his wide administrative experience, the knowledge of the East which he had gained as Viceroy of India, his power of rapidly acquiring a mastery over complicated financial questions, and the breadth and statesmanlike nature of his views—all pointed him out as exceptionally qualified to fulfil the duties entrusted to him. To myself, the appointment was especially pleasing. The relationship between Lord Northbrook and myself, and the mutual esteem and affection which we entertained for each other, were of themselves a sufficient guarantee that we should work cordially together. It was, without doubt, the knowledge that the appointment would not be displeasing to me which to some extent led Lord Granville, with that courteous consideration for others which never failed him, to nominate Lord Northbrook.

Lord Northbrook possessed another, and very important qualification for successfully carrying out the duties assigned to him. He did not blind himself to facts. He had the courage of his opinions. When he had studied his facts and come to some definite conclusions, he was in the habit of stating them without reference to whether they harmonised with any preconceived theories.

The policy of reporting, which was so dear to Mr. Gladstone's Government, appears always to have brought about results which were in each case somewhat similar. Under the graceful diction of Lord Dufferin's Report, in spite of the apparent ease with which the skilled diplomatist glided over difficulties and eluded burning questions, it was easy to observe that the main facts of the situation did not escape the statesmanlike eye of the author, and that he in reality expected the Government to recognise them. Connected, as I was, by general political sympathy with a Liberal Government, and by ties of long-standing family friendship and relationship with some members of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, I came to Egypt with a hearty desire to aid to the best of my ability in the successful execution of his Egyptian policy. I thought I understood that policy, and, if I understood it rightly, I felt sure that it met with my general concurrence. I soon found, however, that I was pursuing a phantom which constantly eluded my grasp, and that, even when I understood something of the general principles which were guiding the action of the Government, the vacillation shown in the execution of the detail was simply heartbreaking. I could not blind myself to facts to please Mr. Gladstone, and directly I stated the facts and pointed out the inevitable conclusions to be drawn from them, I found that, however clear they might be, they were ignored. To cite another instance, General Gordon was sent to the Soudan, not to act, but to report. General Gordon had failed to recognise the real facts in connection with the Soudan when he undertook his mission. After his arrival at Khartoum, he recognised them, but he could not enforce their recognition on Mr. Gladstone; the latter's blindness to facts, which were patent to all the world, eventually resulted in the death of General Gordon, of Colonel Stewart, and of many other brave men. Every one knows the reluctance which many men feel about making a will. Inability to recognise that death is the common lot of all has from time immemorial formed the text alike of the divine and the satirist. Mr. Gladstone appears to have lain under a similar disability in dealing with Egyptian affairs. He ignored all unpleasant facts. Lord Northbrook's fate was to be that of his predecessors. He was asked to "report and advise." It was almost certain, before he began his work, that his report would pass unheeded and that Mr. Gladstone would turn a deaf ear to his advice, unless, which was improbable, it happened to be such as he had wished to receive at the time when, *ex hypothesi*, the Government were in partial ignorance of the facts.

Lord Northbrook arrived in Egypt on September 9, 1884. He remained in the country about six weeks, during which time he laboured strenuously to master all the complicated facts connected with the situation. Before he left Cairo he prepared the draft of his report, but, inasmuch as when he arrived in London, it appeared that his views were distasteful to Mr. Gladstone, his proposals were modified before they assumed their final shape. Eventually, he sent in two reports, both dated November 20, 1884. One of these dealt exclusively with the financial situation. The other was of a more general nature.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on Lord Northbrook's financial proposals. It will be sufficient to say that they involved: (1) adequate provision being made for the improvement and extension of the system of irrigation; (2) a prospect of the abolition of the corvée; (3) the acquisition by the Egyptian Government of greater freedom in the matter of imposing taxes on foreigners; (4) the abolition of the dual administration of the Daira, Domains, and Railways; (5) a reduction of the land-tax, and of the taxes on the export and transit of produce; and (6) the issue of a loan for about £9,000,000, the interest of which was to be guaranteed by the British Government.

"The effect of the proposals which I have made," Lord Northbrook said in concluding his report, "will undoubtedly be to substitute the financial control of England for the international control which was proposed by the Conference; but the alteration seems to me to be an advantage both to the Egyptian and to the English Governments. Nor do I see what objections the other Powers of Europe can entertain to this control being exercised by Great Britain after the sacrifices which have been made in maintaining the peace and safety of Egypt, and the financial liability which has now to be undertaken."

In his general report, after dwelling on the reforms which had already been accomplished, Lord Northbrook added: "The progress, in order to be solid, must necessarily be gradual in a country where the people have had to be taught to comprehend the first elements of decent government. . . .

"I cannot recommend Her Majesty's Government to fix any date at which the British troops serving in Egypt shall be withdrawn. In my report, I have stated my reasons for anticipating that their strength may be reduced before long to about 4000 men, but it is my duty to express my decided opinion that it would not be safe or wise to fix any definite time for their entire withdrawal, because the safety of such a step must depend on the internal state of the country, and upon the political position of Egypt, which has been left in uncertainty in consequence of the failure of the Conference of London."

It will be seen that Lord Northbrook did not attempt to solve the Egyptian question in so far as its solution depended on the continuance of the British occupation. He expressed a strong opinion that the garrison could not be at once withdrawn from Egypt, and there he left the matter. But he made some excellent proposals in respect to the finances of the country. Had these proposals been accepted by the Cabinet and carried into execution, internationalism, which has been the bane of Egypt, would have received a heavy blow, and the paramount power of Great Britain, as the guide and protector of Egypt, would have been asserted.

Lord Northbrook's views were, however, too thoroughgoing for Mr. Gladstone, who was not prepared to guarantee the interest on an Egyptian loan. The proposals also did not receive the support which they deserved from the English press. The result was that nothing was done in the direction of carrying Lord Northbrook's policy into execution. His mission was a failure.

Mr. Gladstone's Government, which fell in June 1885, made no subsequent attempt to settle the Egyptian question in its larger aspects. It is now necessary to deal with an endeavour to arrive at a solution which was made under the auspices of Mr. Gladstone's successor, Lord Salisbury.

# CHAPTER XLVI

## THE WOLFF CONVENTION

AUGUST 1885–OCTOBER 1887

**Sir Henry Wolff appointed Special Commissioner—Convention of October 24, 1885—Moukhtar Pasha—Convention of May 22, 1887—Comparison of the two Conventions—Frontier affairs—The army—Civil reforms—Evacuation—France and Russia oppose the Convention—The Sultan refuses to ratify it—Moukhtar Pasha permanently located in Egypt—Results of the Wolff mission.**

IT might have been thought that a sufficient number of Special Commissioners, diplomatists, and others had already reported on the affairs of Egypt. Such, however, was not the view of the British Government. Lord Salisbury determined to take a leaf out of the book of his predecessors. It was decided to send Sir Henry Wolff, who had been a prominent member of what was then known as the Fourth Party, and who had lost his seat in Parliament at the General Election which had recently taken place, on a mission to Constantinople and Cairo. He was given a sort of general commission to examine into Egyptian affairs. He was to invite the co-operation of the Sultan in the settlement of the Egyptian question; more especially it was thought that it was "in His Majesty's power to contribute materially to the establishment of settled order and good government" in the Soudan.

Sir Henry Wolff arrived in Constantinople on

August 22, 1885. On October 24, he signed a Convention with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs. All that this first Convention settled was the nature of the subjects which were to be discussed. It provided that the British and Turkish Governments were each to send a Special Commissioner to Egypt, where the Ottoman Commissioner was to consult with the Khedive "upon the best means of tranquillising the Soudan by pacific means." The two Commissioners, in concert with the Khedive, were to reorganise the Egyptian army, and also to "examine all the branches of the Egyptian administration, and introduce into them the modifications which they considered necessary, within the limits of the Imperial Firmans." The sixth and most important article of the Convention was couched in the following terms: "So soon as the two High Commissioners shall have established that the security of the frontiers and the good working and stability of the Egyptian Government are assured, they shall present a Report to their respective Governments, who will consult as to the conclusion of a Convention regulating the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt in a convenient period."

In a despatch, dated October 24, Sir Henry Wolff pointed out the advantages which, he thought, had accrued, or were likely to accrue, from the signature of this Convention. "The conclusion of an arrangement," he said, "of any kind has done much to allay the irritation that has existed for some time in the minds of the Turks towards England. . . . The experience of the Sultan's Commissioner, if wisely chosen, will be useful in the elaboration of institutions which must combine both Eastern and Western elements. The same reason will hold good with respect to the regulations in the Soudan. It must, doubtless, have been very difficult for English gentlemen, however able and conciliatory, to come to terms with races who had suffered so severely at our hands. The regulations which are to be undertaken, with our assent and countenance, but between the Khalif and those who recognise his authority, are more likely to lead to a rapid and satisfactory result."

Sir Henry Wolff arrived in Cairo on October 29. The departure from Constantinople of Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha, a distinguished soldier, who was named Turkish Commissioner, was delayed; he did not arrive in Cairo till December 27.

It is unnecessary to describe the lengthy negotiations which ensued. It will be sufficient to say that, after eighteen months of discussion, a further Convention was signed at Constantinople, on May 22, 1887, between Sir Henry Wolff and two Turkish Plenipotentiaries acting on behalf of the Sultan.

The two Conventions may now be compared with a view to ascertaining how far the latter accomplished the objects proposed by the former.

As regards the tranquillisation of the Soudan, Sir Henry Wolff's efforts were foredoomed to failure from the commencement. He spoke of negotiations being undertaken "between the Khalif and those who recognised his authority." Moukhtar Pasha and other Turks were naturally slow to believe that any Mohammedans refused to recognise the authority of the Sultan as Khalif. But every one in Egypt knew that the Mahdi confounded Christians and Turks alike in one common anathema, and that the idea of conjuring with the Sultan's name in the Soudan was a delusion.

On this particular point, therefore, the negotiations conducted by Sir Henry Wolff and Moukhtar Pasha ended in failure. It was reserved for Sir

Francis Grenfell and Colonel Wodehouse to arrive at some settlement of the frontier question by methods which were efficacious because they were based on the true facts of the case, and not on the imaginary facts evolved from the brains of Turkish diplomatists. The defeats which the Dervishes sustained at Arguin and Toski in the summer of 1889, gave peace to the frontier. Powder and shot proved more effective agents than the "authority of the Khalif."

Much discussion took place about the reorganisation of the Egyptian army. At one time, a proposal was put forward to recruit troops in Turkey, an idea which did not find favour with the Sultan. At another time, the notion of importing a number of Turkish officers into Egypt was started. Eventually, however, nothing was done. The British officers were fortunately left to reorganise the Egyptian army after their own fashion. On this point also, therefore, the Convention of October 24, 1885, was unproductive of result.

Much the same may be said as regards administrative reforms. A Protocol annexed to the Convention of May 22, 1887, provided that the British and Ottoman Governments should jointly address the Powers with a view to modifying the Capitulations in the sense of bringing all residents of Egypt "under a local and uniform jurisdiction and legislation." A second Protocol provided that joint representations should be made to the Powers with a view to reforming the administrations of the Domains, Daira, and Railways, defining the powers of the Commissioners of the Debt, and enacting laws relative to the press and to quarantine. But beyond making an enumeration of the points which required the attention of the reformer, nothing was done.

There remains to be considered the sixth and most important article of the Convention of October 24, 1885, namely, that which provided that the Commissioners should discuss the question of the withdrawal of the British garrison from Egypt. It was perhaps rather a bold flight of the official imagination to indulge in the hope that any possible steps taken by the two Commissioners would assure "the good working and stability of the Egyptian Government." The good working and stability of that Government are still assured by the presence of the garrison whose speedy withdrawal from Egypt formed the main subject of the discussions which took place in 1885-87. Too much attention should not, however, be attached to the wording of the Convention of October 1885. Diplomatic instruments of this sort usually abound in euphemisms and picturesque conventionalities. In plain English, the first Convention signed by Sir Henry Wolff meant that England and Turkey were to endeavour to come to terms over the Egyptian question, and, although nothing practical came of the endeavour, some cautious and intelligent steps were taken in the direction intended.

Article V. of the Convention of May 22, 1887, laid down that "at the expiration of three years from the date of the present Convention, Her Britannic Majesty's Government will withdraw its troops from Egypt." This clause seemed explicit enough, but it was followed by another clause, under the provisions of which the British troops were *not* to withdraw at the end of three years if there was any "appearance of danger in the interior or from without." It was not specifically stated who was to judge whether the internal or external danger was sufficient to justify the retention of the British garrison in Egypt, but in the absence of any specific arrangement on this point, it was obvious that the decision rested with the British Government. One important definition was, however, given to the words "danger from without." Article VI. of the Convention laid down that, after the ratification by England and Turkey, the Powers, who were parties to the Treaty of Berlin, should be invited to adhere to it. The ultimate execution of the Convention depended, in fact, on its acceptance by the Powers. In a letter attached to the Convention, which was addressed by Sir Henry Wolff to the Turkish Plenipotentiaries, he said: "If, at the expiration of the three years stipulated in the Convention of this day for the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt, one of the Great Mediterranean Powers shall not have accepted it, Her Britannic Majesty's Government would consider this refusal as the appearance of a danger from without, provided against by Article V. of the Convention, and the means of executing the aforesaid Convention shall be again discussed and settled between the Imperial Ottoman Government and Her Britannic Majesty's Government."

More than this, Article V. provided that if, at any time subsequent to the evacuation, "order and security in the interior were disturbed, or if the Khedivate of Egypt refused to execute its duties towards the Sovereign Court, or its international obligations," both the Ottoman and British Governments would have the right to occupy the country with troops, and, moreover, that if, "by reason of hindrances," the Sultan did not avail himself of his right of occupation, the British Government could none the less take military action on their own account, and that, in that case, the Sultan would "send a Commissioner to remain during the period of the sojourn of the British troops with their Commander."

So long as the negotiations which were preliminary to the signature of the Convention were going on, the embers of diplomatic opposition smouldered. Directly it was signed, they burst into a flame. M. de Nelidoff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, at once "sent to the Palace his remonstrances, and reproached the Grand Vizier with having gratuitously sacrificed the rights of the Sultan to England." "Similar language," Sir Henry Wolff reported on May 27, "had been used to the Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg by M. de Giers, who said that Russia would probably refuse her adhesion, and thus act in the interests of the Sultan."

The French Government also took strong exception to the right of re-entry into Egypt, which the Convention conferred on England. On June 7, the Count de Montebello, who represented France at Constantinople, addressed a minatory letter to the Sultan in which he stated that the "French Government had definitely decided not to accept the situation which would result from the ratification of the Egyptian Convention."

The Sultan was perplexed. On July 9, the Turkish Plenipotentiaries called on Sir Henry Wolff. "They said that the recent language of the French and Russian Ambassadors, both at the Palace and the Porte, had much disturbed the Sultan. His Majesty had been told that if he ratified the Convention, France and Russia would thereby be given the right to occupy provinces of the Empire, and to leave only after a similar Convention had been concluded. France might do so in Syria, and Russia in Armenia. Religious feeling had also been excited in the same direction."

Under these circumstances, it was asked, could not Sir Henry Wolff "advise as to some formula by which these difficulties might be met?" Sir

Henry could not advise the distracted Plenipotentiaries as to any formula. He "had exhausted his powers of reference" to Lord Salisbury. What was an unfortunate ruler who was torn hither and thither by rival diplomatists to do? He could at all events fall back upon his favourite device and try to gain time. Under Article VII. of the Convention the ratifications were to be exchanged within one month of the date on which the Convention was signed. The British Government were implored to prolong this period. On June 26, that is to say four days after the prescribed period of a month had expired, the Turkish Ambassador represented to Lord Salisbury that "the Sultan was much fatigued after Bairam," and wanted time to consider the whole question. A short delay was granted, but the Sultan was still unable to make up his mind as to whether he would or would not ratify the Convention. Sir Henry Wolff then announced his intention of leaving Constantinople. He at once received a letter from the Sultan's Grand Master of the Ceremonies which was to the following effect: "His Majesty is at this moment occupied with questions of the greatest importance for his Empire. In view of these occupations, which will last all next week, he is anxious that you should remain at Constantinople until Friday, July 15." Sir Henry Wolff's departure was accordingly fixed for July 15. At 8.30 P.M. of that day he telegraphed to Lord Salisbury: "Just as I am leaving, Artin Effendi has come with a personal message from the Sultan urgently pressing me to stay. I have told him that this is quite impossible." At midnight on July 15, Sir Henry Wolff left Constantinople.

Shortly after he left, the Sultan, through his Ambassador in London, made an unsuccessful attempt to renew the negotiations with the British

Government. He was informed by Lord Salisbury "that so long as the Sultan was so much under the influence of other advisers as to repudiate an agreement which he had himself so recently sanctioned, any fresh agreement would obviously be liable to meet with the same fate as the late Convention."

It should be added that one practical consequence of an unfortunate nature resulted from the Wolff mission. Before that time, the Egyptian administrative machine was sufficiently complicated. Henceforth, an additional complication was added. A Turkish Commissioner was left in Egypt. When once the negotiations had broken down, there was no plausible excuse for the continued presence in Egypt of a high Turkish official, whose functions could not be defined, whose presence would naturally be resented by the Khedive, and who at any moment might become the centre of intrigue. Moukhtar Pasha was, however, allowed to remain. In spite of his high personal character, the presence of a Turkish Commissioner in Egypt has served no useful purpose, and has at times caused some trouble.

Although the negotiations conducted by Sir Henry Wolff failed to effect their object, the British Government were in a better diplomatic position at their close than they had been at their commencement. They could henceforth point to the fact that they had made an endeavour to come to terms with the Sultan on the Egyptian question; that they had, moreover, succeeded in their endeavour; and that it was no fault of theirs if the Sultan, under the pressure of France and Russia, had refused to ratify an arrangement to which at one time he had agreed. Strong in this argument, the British Government could feel that the Wolff negotiations, although for the time being unproductive of result, had fortified their position as against both Mohammedan and European critics.

The neutralisation of the Suez Canal, to which allusion was made in Article III. of the Convention of May 22, 1887, formed the subject of further discussion, with results which will now be described.

# CHAPTER XLVII

## THE NEUTRALISATION OF THE SUEZ CANAL[1]

Neutralisation of Egypt — Neutralisation of the Canal — The word neutrality—Circular of January 3, 1883—The Suez Canal Commission of 1885 — The Commission dissolved — The Wolff Convention—Signature of the Canal Convention—Its application.

At one time, politicians in search of an idea flattered themselves with the belief that the solution of the Egyptian question was to be found in neutralising Egypt. Why, it was sometimes asked, should not Egypt become an "Oriental Belgium"? A point is already gained by the advocates of any political idea when they can label their pet theory with an epigrammatic ticket of this sort. The mere appellation gives their proposal the appearance of involving some sound and statesmanlike principle. Catchpenny phrases exercise a good deal of influence in the government of the world. In the *Sturm und Drang* of public life in this busy century, large numbers of people who are engaged in politics are often too much occupied with other matters to inquire carefully whether the particular phrase in question embodies, as may at first sight appear, the elements of a sound policy based on the true facts of the situation, or whether, as is not unfrequently the case, it is a mere tinsel covering beneath which some glaring fallacy may lurk.

---

[1] See further remarks on this subject on p. 565.

The proposal to neutralise Egypt belongs to the latter of these two categories. Its tinsel covering consists of an argument, which may conveniently be stated in the form of a syllogism thus: The most serious aspect of the Egyptian question is that it may, under contingencies which are easily conceivable, bring about a rupture between France and England. The principal element of danger consists in the two facts that England would resent a French occupation, whilst France resents a British occupation of the country. Therefore, the danger will be removed and all risk of a rupture will disappear if both France and England agree that neither of them shall occupy Egypt.

This appears at first sight a compact and plausible chain of argument. Unfortunately, it is fallacious, for the main question to be decided is not whether both England and France shall abstain from occupying the country, but whether, inasmuch as some foreign occupation is necessary, the occupiers shall be French or British. The analogy between Belgium and Egypt breaks down on this essential point, that whereas Belgium is inhabited by a highly civilised population capable of self-government, the population of Egypt is for the present incapable of governing itself on principles which would commend themselves to the civilised world. This bald fact, namely, that a foreign occupation was, and still is necessary in order to prevent anarchy in Egypt, and, therefore, in order to obviate the resuscitation of an Egyptian question which would be a source of constant trouble to Europe, has been frequently forgotten by those who have from time to time discussed Egyptian affairs. Nevertheless, I am convinced that it is true, and, moreover, that it is of a nature to quash all ideas of neutralisation, Oriental Belgiums, and similar phantasies.

Most responsible and impartial authorities who have studied the Egyptian question appear so far to have arrived at the conclusion stated above. It is true that Article V. of the Convention of May 22, 1887, provided that the Great Powers were to be "invited to sign an Act recognising and guaranteeing the inviolability of Egyptian territory"; but this was immediately followed by a provision which enabled Turkey and England to occupy the country in case any foreign occupation should become necessary. For all practical purposes, it may, therefore, be said that the idea of neutralising Egypt, in the true sense of the word, has never got beyond the stage of academic discussion.

It has been otherwise with the question of neutralising the Suez Canal. This subject attracted the attention of the Powers of Europe in 1882, notice having been more particularly drawn to it by the fact that, during the period which preceded the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, Lord Wolseley used the Canal as his base of operations. Before proceeding to state what was done in this matter, it may be as well to describe what, in this particular instance, was meant by the word neutrality.

In the words of Lord Pauncefote, an excellent authority on this subject, the word as applied to the proposals made in connection with the Suez Canal, "had reference only to the neutrality which attaches by international law to the territorial waters of a neutral state, in which a right of innocent passage for belligerent vessels exists, but no right to commit any act of hostility."

The definition of the term is important. Lord Granville was evidently apprehensive lest the mere use of the word "neutrality" should carry him farther than he intended. With commendable prudence, therefore, he directed that, in dealing with this subject, its use should be avoided and that the words "freedom" or "free navigation" should be substituted in its place.

Some three months after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, Lord Granville addressed a Circular to the Powers in order to give them "full information on all matters, which were immediately connected with the peace, security, and social order of Egypt, and on which, accordingly, they (*i.e.* the British Government) had thought it their duty to advise the Khedive as to the best mode of exercising his governing power."

In this Circular, a prominent place was given to the arrangements which it was proposed should for the future be adopted in connection with the free navigation of the Suez Canal.

The question was then allowed to sleep till early in 1885, when, at the instance of the French Government, it was decided to assemble a Commission in Paris composed of representatives of the Great Powers, as well as of Spain and Holland, in order to discuss the question of neutralising the Canal. The British Government would have preferred "that all the Maritime Powers who applied should be permitted to send delegates," but to this proposal the French objected. The purpose for which the Commission was convoked was to "establish by a conventional act a definite system for guaranteeing at all times and to all Powers the free use of the Suez Canal."

The first meeting was held on March 30, 1885, the proceedings being opened by M. Jules Ferry, the French Prime Minister.

M. Billot, the Director-General of the French Foreign Office, then assumed the presidency of the Commission, but the real work was delegated to a Sub-Commission, over which M. Barrère, the second French representative, presided.

It is needless to describe the proceedings of the

Commission in detail. It will be sufficient to say that the object of the majority of the Powers was to internationalise rather than to neutralise the Canal, and that the British Government were opposed to the adoption of this course.

The British delegates were obliged to fight the ground inch by inch. Although they made some concessions, they were unable to come to terms with their adversaries. Eventually, after some ten weeks of wearisome discussion, a draft Treaty was drawn up representing the views of the majority. It is unnecessary to dwell in detail on the points at issue between France and her allies on the one side, and England, supported to a certain extent by Italy, on the other. It will be sufficient to say that they were of a nature to exclude, for the time being, the possibility of any common understanding.

On June 13, the Commission held its last sitting. A few days later, Mr. Gladstone's Ministry fell. The question of neutralising the Canal was again allowed to sleep for a while. Shortly afterwards, Sir Henry Wolff started on his mission. The question of the free navigation of the Canal formed the subject of negotiation at Constantinople, with the result that an Article (III.) on this point was inserted in the Convention of May 22, 1887. Briefly it may be said that this Article embodied the views which had been maintained by the British delegates in Paris in June 1885.

Although the Convention of May 22, 1887, was not ratified by the Sultan, the idea of neutralising the Canal was not allowed to drop. It was one to which the French attached great importance. Eventually, after some lengthy negotiations, which need not be described in detail, a Convention, the text of which is to be found in *Egypt*, No. 2 of 1889, was signed on April 29, 1888. The British

Government stipulated that the Convention was not to come into force so long as the British occupation of Egypt lasted.

Nothing further was done in this matter until 1904. Under the Anglo-French Agreement, signed on April 8 of that year, the British Government agreed to put the Suez Canal Convention, of April 29, 1888, into force, with the exception of those portions which provided that a Local International Board should be created at Cairo to watch over the execution of the Convention.

Thus, another important step was taken in the direction of settling the Egyptian question.

The actual working of the Canal Convention was put to the test during the Russo-Japanese War. On the whole, it may be said that it worked well, but, as usually happens in such cases, a number of questions of detail arose in respect to which the wording of the Convention was wanting in precision. It would be desirable that an opportunity should be taken to revise the Convention by the light of the experience which has now been gained.

# CHAPTER XLVIII

## THE ANGLO-FRENCH AGREEMENT OF 1904

Apparent insolubility of the Egyptian question—Gradual change in public opinion—Statement of Lord Ellenborough—The business of diplomacy—The main facts of the problem—The events of 1904—Morocco—Signature of the Anglo-French Agreement—Remarks on the Agreement.

For some years subsequent to the Wolff negotiations, no attempt was made to deal with the larger aspects of the Egyptian Question. Whenever the British Government were reproached by the French, or by British partisans of evacuation, with not having fulfilled their pledge to evacuate, the reply persistently given, by both Conservative and Liberal statesmen, was that England's work in Egypt was not yet completed. This reply, though regarded by some as a mere subterfuge, was perfectly true; yet it did not convey the whole truth. It encouraged the inference that England's work would be completed at some period, which would not be very remote, whereas not one of the British statesmen who gave the reply had any precise idea as to whether the period would be remote or proximate. The better was his acquaintance with the facts, the stronger would his conviction be that the period would be remote, even to the extent of giving a distinctly permanent character to the occupation, which was originally intended to be temporary.

For more than twenty years, therefore, politicians, whether professional or amateur, French or English, wandered aimlessly in a labyrinth to which there was no clue. They sought for the solution of a question which was in reality insoluble on any basis which had, during that period, been formulated. Eventually, Englishmen relaxed their attempts to make a pyramid stand on its apex; whilst Frenchmen gradually recognised two facts. One was that the British occupation of Egypt was beneficial rather than hurtful to the material interests of France, whilst general French political interests suffered from the prolonged estrangement of the two countries, which was caused by the Egyptian Question. The other was that, unless the evacuation of Egypt was to be made a *casus belli* with England, the British view of the facts had to be accepted.

An English politician, writing in 1844, had said: "It is impossible for any statesman who carries his views forward a few years not to see that there must be eventually a contest among European Powers for the possession of Egypt."[1]

That contest, if it ever came, could only be between England and France. It was the business of diplomacy to be on the watch for any opportunity to settle the question, and thus avoid any such calamity as that predicted by Lord Ellenborough.

The main facts connected with the Egyptian Question were in reality very simple.

It was certain that, in the early days of the occupation, the British Government stated publicly their desire to withdraw the British garrison, so soon as circumstances admitted of the adoption of such a course.

It was equally certain to all who considered the subject impartially, and with a full knowledge of the circumstances, that the British Government could not, with a due regard to all the interests involved, carry out their declared intention.

---

[1] Letter from Lord Ellenborough, *Sir Robert Peel*, vol. iii. p. 259.

Gradually, the truth of this latter statement came to be generally recognised, and when once it was recognised, all that was required to set diplomatic action in movement was an opportunity for negotiating with a fair prospect of success.

Such an opportunity occurred in 1904. The visits of King Edward VII. to Paris, and of the President of the French Republic to London, prepared the public opinion of both countries for a general settlement of all outstanding differences. Moreover, at this moment the affairs of Morocco acquired some prominence.

That State had been for some while past traversing the various stages on the road to ruin, which would appear to be normal in the case of Oriental countries. The final stage had nearly been reached. The exercise of unbridled personal power by the ruler of the State led to misgovernment, culminating in revolution. European intervention had become inevitable. The only practical question at issue was to decide on the nationality of the Europeans who were to intervene.

The choice practically lay between three nations, Spain, England, and France.

Spain, still staggering under the effects of a disastrous war with America, was manifestly incapable of assuming the task of regenerator.

England was unwilling to add to her already heavy burthen of world-wide responsibilities.

The duty of dealing with Morocco devolved, therefore, naturally on France.[1] But, in order that the task should be taken in hand with a fair prospect of success, the goodwill of England was necessary. What, therefore, could be more natural than to barter British support in Morocco for French support in Egypt?

---

[1] The difficulties which subsequently occurred between France and Germany, as also the proceedings of the Algeciras Conference, lie obviously outside the scope of this work. Moreover, those difficulties did not arise until a period subsequent to the signature of the Anglo-French Agreement of April 8, 1904.

Negotiations on this basis were commenced in the summer of 1903, with the result that, on April 8, 1904, three Conventions were signed by Lord Lansdowne, who then presided over the British Foreign Office, and by M. Cambon, the French Ambassador in London.

Two of these Conventions dealt with the affairs of Newfoundland, Nigeria, Siam, Madagascar, and the New Hebrides. The consideration of these questions lies outside the scope of the present work.

As regards Egypt, it has been already explained that the Egyptian Government acquired financial liberty, and also that the British Government recognised the Suez Canal Convention of 1888. Further, a "Declaration" made on April 8, 1904, contained the following very important provision:—

"His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of altering the political status of Egypt.

"The Government of the French Republic, for their part, declare that they will not obstruct the action of Great Britain in that country by asking that a limit of time be fixed for the British Occupation or in any other manner."

In other words, the occupation was recognised, and the British Government were left a far freer hand than formerly to deal with Egyptian affairs.

The Governments of Germany, Austria, and Italy subsequently adhered to this declaration.

Thus, the "Egyptian Question," in the sense in which that phrase had heretofore been used, was partially settled. It is rare that an arrangement of this kind is of a nature to give satisfaction to all those who are directly or indirectly concerned. Such, however, was the case as regards the Anglo-French Agreement.

As to the advantages which are likely to accrue to the residents in Egypt, both European and Egyptian, there cannot be a shadow of doubt. Apart from the fact that the financial restrictions, which by a change of circumstances had become obsolete and unnecessary, have been removed, it is to be observed that Egyptian progress will now, it may be hoped, continue to advance without being hampered by that somewhat acute stage of international rivalry which has been productive of so much harm in the past.

Both England and France gained in the removal of a difference of opinion which had for long embittered the relations of two nations whose common interest it is to strengthen the bonds of close friendship.

England gained by obtaining a practically valid sanction to a position which was previously, to some extent, irregular. I had for long been convinced that the early withdrawal of the British garrison from Egypt was quite impossible, but I never regarded lightly the non-fulfilment of the engagement to withdraw. Neither did I ever think that a good deal of provocation in local matters constituted a sufficient plea to justify the annulment of that engagement. It is a distinct advantage for a nation, which is bound to a scrupulous respect of international obligations by every consideration of public morality and self-interest, that it can no longer be accused of any apparent disregard of those obligations.

France also gained. The large French interests at stake in Egypt are secured by specific engagements, and are still more amply secured by the traditional character of British predominance, wherever it has been acquired. On the other hand, any apparent loss of French political influence in Egypt received compensation elsewhere.

Lastly, the civilised world—whose principal interest I conceive to be the maintenance of peace—gained by the re-establishment of very friendly relations between two of the most important members of the European family.

Such, therefore, is the view I venture to submit of this very important and auspicious transaction. I began my connection with Egypt twenty-eight years previous to the signature of the Anglo-French Agreement, when England and France moved hand in hand together in that country. I rejoice that my connection lasted long enough to enable me to see the friendly relations of the past re-established after an interlude of misunderstanding which was detrimental alike to British, French, and Egyptian interests.

A further Egyptian Question remains behind. It consists in gradually adapting the institutions of the country to the growing needs of the population. Possibly, time will also solve that problem, but, unless disaster is to ensue, it must be a long time.

# PART VI

# THE REFORMS

*In the East, we are attempting to put new wine into old bottles, to pour what we can of a civilisation whose spirit is progress into the form of a civilisation whose spirit is fixity; and whether we succeed or not is perhaps the most interesting question in an age abounding almost beyond example in questions of political interest.*

BAGEHOT, *Physics and Politics.*

# CHAPTER XLIX

## THE COURBASH

**Universal use of the courbash—Lord Dufferin's Circular—It was partially inoperative—Final abolition of the courbash.**

Reforms in all countries, which are in a backward state of civilisation, can be divided into two categories, namely, first, those which are manifestly possible if the reformer is provided with the money and the administrative agency necessary to their execution; secondly, those dealing with long-standing abuses or faulty habits of thought, which are ingrained to such an extent into the minds of the population as to require a social almost as much as an administrative revolution in order to ensure their eradication.

The present and the two succeeding chapters will deal with the most prominent instances of Egyptian reforms belonging to the second of these categories. These are the three C's—the Courbash, the Corvée, and Corruption.

It was formerly the custom of the governing classes in Egypt to practise many cruel forms of torture on the population. One case which came under my personal notice may be mentioned as an example of the perverse ingenuity which was occasionally exhibited in discovering recondite means for the infliction of bodily pain. A Moudir was in the habit of causing a burning rag steeped in spirits of wine to be held close to the mouth of any recalcitrant taxpayer, who then received a blow on the chest, the consequence of which was that, the air being expelled from his lungs, he was obliged to take a deep breath to refill them. The flame was thus drawn into his mouth. The official who was guilty of this particular act of barbarity was by no means a bad specimen of his class. He simply followed certain caste traditions, which led him to be callous to the pain inflicted on a fellow-creature. It was with the aid of administrative material such as this Moudir that the English had, in the first instance, to create the New Egypt.

Refined forms of torture were, however, comparatively rare. On the other hand, the use of the courbash, a strip of hippopotamus hide tapering at the end, was universal. When such a simple and effective form of torture as flogging with this implement could readily be applied, there was, indeed, no need for refinements in cruelty. The courbash was employed on every occasion when coercion or punishment was required, but notably for the collection of taxes and for extracting either the evidence of witnesses or the confession of persons accused of crime.

Confession forms an important part of the Mohammedan law of evidence. If, the Mohammedan lawgiver argued, a man confesses his crime, he must surely be guilty. What, then, added the Turco-Egyptian Pasha with mediæval logic and assurance, can be more just and natural than that when I see that he will not inculpate himself, and when I know that either he or some one else must be guilty, I should flog him to see if he will confess? It is true that he may afterwards retract his confession, but no importance can be attached to his retractation; for, if he is not guilty, why did he, in the first instance, confess his crime? Moreover, if some glimmering of doubt entered into the mind of the old-fashioned Pasha as to the soundness of this process of reasoning, he would change his tactics. He would bid avaunt to the argumentative subtleties of the Frank, and would triumphantly point out that, even supposing the confession to have been made in order to obtain relief from bodily pain, no injustice was committed, for, ere one stroke of the courbash had been administered, he, the Pasha, knew that the man was guilty, and that the flogging was, therefore, a mere formality in order to obtain the confession necessary to give legal sanction to the punishment, which the criminal had richly deserved. The Pasha, having complied with the text of the law, to which, oblivious of its spirit, he attached the utmost importance, no valid complaint could be made; nor, indeed, was it necessary to ask any useless questions as regards the method adopted to ensure compliance.[1]

When Lord Dufferin came to Cairo, one of his first resolves was of a negative nature. It was not at that time clear how Egypt was to be governed for the future, but Lord Dufferin determined that in any case the country should not, if he could prevent it, be ruled by an indiscriminate use of the whip. Under his auspices, a Circular was issued forbidding the use of the courbash. It was signed by Ismail Pasha Eyoub, who was then Minister of the Interior, and is a curious and very characteristic document. Like many Oriental state-papers, it assumed a condition of things which was wholly at variance with the reality. Any one unacquainted with the ways of the East might, on reading it, suppose that the rulers of Egypt had on frequent occasions used their utmost endeavours to suppress the use of the courbash, and that they were scandalised to learn that, in spite of all their humane efforts, that implement was still very generally employed. Any such conclusion would have been wholly erroneous. No real effort had ever been made by the Egyptian portion of the administration to abolish torture.

---

[1] I wish to explain that here, and elsewhere, I am speaking of the "old-fashioned Pasha," that is to say, the Pasha who existed some twenty-five years ago. This type has now almost entirely disappeared. The modern Pasha may have his defects, but he is generally an educated and enlightened gentleman.

It is, however, proverbially unnecessary to look a gift horse in the mouth. If the thistles of Pashadom could, under pressure, be made to produce figs, the business of the British statesman was to make the most of the figs, and not to dwell on the circumstances by which the change of production had been effected. Whatever Ismail Pasha Eyoub and his coadjutors may have thought on the subject of government by torture, their sentiments, as expressed in the Circular, were unimpeachably orthodox when judged by the standard of modern civilisation. It was stated, in terms of indignant remonstrance, that, in spite of reiterated Circulars in past days, the Minister of the Interior had heard, to his unspeakable regret, that recourse was still had by some perverse officials to the "reprehensible use of the bastinado." This practice was denounced as "horrible and infamous." It "degraded humanity, and violated in the gravest manner the principles of social rights." Further, it was "absolutely useless and without justification," for the Minister, who here indulged to a certain extent in a flight of his imagination, pointed out that the Government had instituted law-courts, whose business it was to deal with all litigious affairs, both civil and criminal. As to the collection of the taxes, what need could there be of the whip when the series of Decrees issued by the Government laid down with commendable precision the nature of the measures to be taken to ensure their payment? The various officials were, therefore, solemnly warned that "the only object of their mission was to secure, as much as possible, the welfare of the people, their prosperity, and their moral and material development, by dispensing to individuals equality of justice whilst defending them against all aggression and protecting their interests and their rights." They were all, down to the lowest village Sheikh, who was sometimes courbashed and sometimes courbashed others, adjured in language which, to those acquainted with the peculiar ways of the Pashadom of the time, is almost comic in its deceptive pathos, to abstain in the future from the abominable and barbarous practice of flogging.

Ismail Pasha Eyoub probably stated the truth when he said that on previous occasions orders had been issued prohibiting the use of the courbash. It is needless to inquire into this point, for, if any such orders were issued, no adequate steps were taken to enforce obedience to them. But when the Circular of Ismail Pasha Eyoub was published, the population of Egypt, and more especially that portion of it which was in the habit of being flogged, woke up to the fact that they no longer had to deal with a few meaningless platitudes intended to throw dust in the eyes of humanitarians. It was felt that, although the signature to the Circular might be that of an official who had little real sympathy with its spirit, the contents of that document had been dictated by the British Envoy, who meant what he said, and who, moreover, possessed both the will and the power to enforce his behests. One instance will suffice to show the spirit which the new order evoked. A British officer was present, shortly after the issue of the order, when a man who was accused of some crime was brought before the Moudir of the province. The man declined to answer the questions which were put to him. The Moudir directed that he should be flogged. All the steps which were usually preliminary to the infliction of flogging were taken. The man, however, was in no way impressed. "The English are here," he said to the Moudir; "you know that you cannot flog me." And accordingly, he was not flogged. It may well have been that the unwonted audacity displayed in this case was due to the presence of an Englishman. Nevertheless, the mere fact that an Egyptian fellah should have dared to assert his right not to be flogged was a striking innovation. A reflective Pasha would have noted that a new spirit was abroad.

Lord Dufferin's Circular constitutes a landmark in the administrative history of Egypt. To him belongs the credit of having dealt the first decisive blow to the system of government by flogging. He has, however, often been criticised for his action in this matter. The people of Egypt, it has been said, had from time immemorial been governed by the whip. Was it safe to abolish this system by a stroke of the pen, without substituting anything in its place? The reign of law, which Lord Dufferin held should take the place of the courbash, would necessarily be a work of slow creation. A month after the issue of the Circular he himself wrote: "At this moment, there is no real justice in this country. What passes under that name is a mockery." Would it not have been wiser to have accepted the facts of the situation, to have aimed at the gradual abolition of the courbash, and to have postponed its total suppression until some progress had been made in the direction of establishing properly constituted law-courts?

These criticisms are perhaps, to some extent, justified. There need have been no hesitation in abolishing at once the system of flogging in so far as the collection of taxes was concerned. That system had been shaken by the reforms introduced under the auspices of the Dual Control. The burthen of taxation, though still heavy, had been alleviated, and the legal process for the recovery of taxes, being a matter in which the governing body was directly interested, was in sufficiently good order to ensure the Treasury against serious loss. It was, however, otherwise in respect to the procedure of the law-courts. The principle on which the Government had heretofore acted was to mete out punishment without entering into any fine discrimination as to whether those who incurred the punishment were guilty or innocent of the crimes laid to their charge. The confessions extracted under torture, though often false, were sometimes true. The idea that any witness would voluntarily appear to give evidence was foreign to the habits of the Egyptian people. Justice, such as it was, was almost as much a terror to the innocent witness as to the accused person against whom testimony was borne. Under these circumstances, there was, without doubt, a risk that as a result of the sudden and complete abolition of the courbash, crime and lawlessness would be inadequately checked, and that Egyptian society in general would be in danger of dissolution.

It is probable, indeed, that when Lord Dufferin decided that the use of the courbash in Egypt should suddenly cease, he did not fully realise the importance of the step which he was taking. This view is confirmed by a perusal of the despatch which he wrote to Lord Granville forwarding the Circular. It was very brief. It did not contain anything from which it can be inferred that Lord Dufferin realised that he had initiated a social and administrative revolution. "The new Minister of the Interior, Ismail Pasha Eyoub," Lord Dufferin wrote, "has signalised his entry into office by peremptorily forbidding the application of this instrument of chastisement (*i.e.* the courbash). I cannot but regard such an act as significant of the introduction of a more humane and civilised spirit into the civil administration of the country."

In other words, when Lord Dufferin came to Egypt he found that the poorer classes of the population were habitually flogged by the agents of the Government. He naturally thought that they ought not to be flogged. What, therefore, could be simpler than to issue an order that flogging should cease, and to insist on the execution of the order? There is a "scorn of consequence" and a breezy lightheartedness in the conduct of the courageous Irishman which excites alike admiration and amusement. It is probable, however, that, after all that can be said, he was quite right. The action of any one who knew Egypt well would perhaps have been more cautious, but it might not improbably have been less effective. Lord Dufferin threw the Egyptian administrator into the water and called out to him from the bank that he must learn to swim as well as he could without the help of his time-honoured support.

Did the Egyptian administrator at once learn to swim? He did not. In fact, the main reason why no dissolution of provincial society took place in consequence of the Circular was that it was partially inoperative. Lord Dufferin dealt a staggering blow to the use of the courbash; nevertheless, that implement was plentifully used for some years after the issue of his epoch-making Circular. In the early days of the British occupation, crime increased to such an extent that Nubar Pasha thought it necessary to create the Commissions of Brigandage to which allusion has been already made.[1] These Commissions virtually took the place of the ordinary Tribunals. Recourse was had to the old system of torture. To quote one out of many passages which occur in a report prepared by M. Le Grelle, the Procureur-Général of the Native Courts, dated April 6, 1889:—

"En Septembre, 1888, un acte de brigandage se commit à Manchite Gouzour (Menoufieh). Une enquête amena l'arrestation d'une série de prévenus. Quatre firent des aveux. Sur les ordres réitérés d'un Mouavin du Ministère de l'Intérieur venu à Chibin-el-Kom, la torture fut employée pendant six jours de suite, en pleine séance de la Commission Criminelle, devant le Moudir, le Juge, et le Substitut du Parquet. Les malheureux étaient frappés jusqu'au moment où ils avouaient ou satisfaisaient par leurs réponses les enquêteurs. Parmi les torturés, figurait une femme appelée Fatmah."

Eventually, the Commissions were abolished and, at the same time, Sir John Scott was named Judicial Adviser to the Egyptian Government. Then the work, which Lord Dufferin commenced, was completed. Torture ceased.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* p. 289.

# CHAPTER L

## THE CORVÉE

Connection between the courbash and the corvée—Merits and demerits of the corvée system—The corvée law—Dredging the canals—Proposed reduction of the land-tax—Proposal to abolish the corvée instead of reducing the land-tax—The Powers object—Action of the British Government—The corvée is not called out—A Decree is issued partially abolishing the corvée—Final settlement of the question in 1892.

THE gods, we know, are just, and of our vices, pleasant or otherwise, make instruments to scourge us. The Egyptian Government, not only that of the Pashas who ruled the country in these latter days of which this history treats, but that of their predecessors from the days of the Pharaohs onwards, was vicious in this respect, that it had held that the only way to govern the Egyptians was perpetually to flog them.[1] This special form of administrative vice was suddenly arrested. A superior authority decreed that flogging was to cease. Then the scourge of the gods, whose time for avenging past misdeeds had come, was at once applied in the following practical shape. The people of Egypt could not live unless they were supplied with water to irrigate their fields. The water could not be placed on the fields unless the mud, which the rise of the Nile leaves at the bottom of the canals, was annually removed. It was in the interests of the people themselves that the mud should be removed in due time and season. But the majority of the people were blind to their own interests. They had always been accustomed to coercion. For centuries past, the practice had been to call on them to work in order to remove the mud, and, in case of need, to flog them unless they responded to the call. They now learnt that they were not, under any circumstances, to be flogged. In that case, they said, we need not, and we will not remove the mud. "The Ministry of Public Works," Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff wrote on January 14, 1885, "finds by certain indications that the corvée system, which was enforced by the courbash, is becoming no longer possible under a milder régime. The peasantry refuse to go to the works at the bidding of the Moudirs, and they can no longer be compelled. The result is that the clearance of the canals is imperfectly performed."

---

[1] The employment of the corvée dates from very ancient times. See, for instance, the description of Solomon's "bond-service" in 1 Kings ix. 15-22.

It is said that 100,000 men were made to work three months in the year for eighteen years to build the great Pyramid.

Clearly, some means other than flogging had to be found in order to get the mud removed. That was one of the first problems which had to be solved by the British administrators of Egypt, and a very difficult problem it was. How was a torpid, semi-civilised Government to get on when, being suddenly overtaken by the rush of an imperious civilisation, it was deprived of the use of the only implement by which the people had heretofore been governed? The dilemma was one which might well have puzzled more capable men than these bewildered Egyptian Ministers who, by no fault of their own, were the last inheritors of the administrative vices bequeathed to them by their political ancestors. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the British Envoy, when he dictated the order that flogging was to cease, realised the fact that it might become necessary to flog the Egyptian people in order to prevent them from starving. Yet it is a fact that humanitarian diplomacy nearly received a severe check owing to the difficulty of getting a certain quantity of mud lifted from the bottom of a number of ditches and deposited on their banks.

It is in some respects unfortunate that the word "corvée" has been incorporated into the English language. The Arabic word is somewhat euphemistic; it is "Aouna," signifying "assistance which is compulsorily rendered." The word corvée conjures up ideas based on the condition of the French peasantry, who were "corvéable, taillable et tuable à volonté" in the pre-revolutionary days. It is, indeed, difficult to get Englishmen to believe that anything can be said in favour of a system with which such pitiful tales of suffering are associated.

From a theoretical point of view, however, the system of forced labour is capable of defence as one, amongst several forms of taxation. Moreover, from a practical point of view, it admits in some cases of justification. It may be that a country is so exceptionally situated that the interests of the community oblige the governing body to force a certain number of its citizens to fulfil their duties of citizenship by giving manual labour rather than money payments to the State. The existence of Holland depends on the dykes being kept in proper order. So also, the material prosperity of Egypt may be said to depend on the clearing of the canals in due season and on adequate steps being taken to guard against inundation.[1]

---

[1] In the seventeenth century, the corvée existed in England. Macaulay says: "Every parish was bound to repair the highways which passed through it. The peasantry were forced to give their gratuitous labour six days in the year" (*Works,* vol. i. p. 293). A

Although, however, recourse may justifiably be had to the corvée under certain exceptional circumstances, the system of exacting taxes in the form of manual labour is a bad one in this respect, that it is singularly liable to abuse.

The abuses to which it gave rise in Egypt were very similar to those which existed in France at the close of the eighteenth century.[1] When Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff first examined this question, he found that the annual clearing of the canals required the work of one-eighth of the population during ninety days. "This number," he wrote on January 14, 1885, "would be amply sufficient, but owing to the fact that a large proportion of the agricultural population sends not a man to the corvée, the burden falls on the remainder with extreme severity. Instead of one-eighth of the whole population working for ninety days, a much larger proportion from certain poor districts is employed for 180 days." For instance, in the province of Gharbieh, "the Wakfs, which own 19,024 acres with a population of 4000 men, and the large proprietors, who own 83,200 acres with 17,000 men, send no men to the corvée, and pay no ransom money."

A well-intentioned but unsuccessful effort was made under the auspices of the Dual Control to deal with the corvée question. A Decree was issued on January 25, 1881, under which every inhabitant of Egypt, with a few perfectly legitimate exceptions, was rendered liable to be called out for corvée work. In certain cases, a money payment was accepted in lieu of personal service. This law was evaded by the rich, and rigorously enforced on the poor.

---

Scotch law to a similar effect was passed in 1719 (*Social Life in Scotland*, Graham, i. 167). To this day, the corvée is used for the maintenance of rural roads in France.

[1] Arthur Young's *Travels in France*, 1787-89, p. 45.

During the first two years of the British occupation, great difficulty was encountered in getting the canals cleared out. It was, however, found that scientific knowledge could, in some degree, serve as a substitute for labour. By skilful treatment, a portion of the alluvial deposit of the Nile was floated on to the fields and prevented from settling at the bottom of the canals. "By a little manœuvring of the water during the flood," Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff wrote on January 31, 1885, "Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Willcocks has got a depth of ·80 metres to take out of a canal this year, where last year more than two metres had to be cleared. In Major Ross's hands this year, the clearance of the Ismailieh Canal (done by dredging, not by corvée) will cost not more, I hope, than £3000. Last year, it cost about £15,000. By the use of the 'Barrage' we raise the water surface in the canals, and they will not require to be cleared so deep."

It was, however, obviously impossible to substitute free for forced labour unless money was forthcoming to pay the labourers. A sum of about £400,000 annually would, it was estimated, be required in order to ensure the total abolition of the corvée in so far as removing the deposit from the bottom of the canals was concerned. It was not until the summer of 1885, that there appeared any prospect of being able to obtain even a moiety of this sum. Lord Northbrook, in November 1884, recommended that the land-tax should be reduced by £450,000 a year. A budget framed on this basis was communicated to the Powers by the British Government on December 6, 1884. After some diplomatic wrangling, a Khedivial Decree, to which the Powers had assented, was eventually signed on July 27, 1885. This Decree indirectly involved sanction to the proposed relief from taxation.

I have already mentioned that, dealing with Egyptian affairs, appearances are often deceptive. I have now to explain a remarkable instance of financial and political mirage. Under the arrangement made with the Powers, it appeared that a relief of taxation to the extent of £450,000 a year would be afforded to the Egyptian taxpayers. When, however, the question of carrying out the provisions of the Decree of July 27, 1885, arose, it was found that the boon, which in appearance was conferred on the people of Egypt, was to a great extent illusory. The figures had been so manipulated that a large portion of the money, which the Powers appeared to give with one hand, was taken away with the other. On October 1, 1885, Sir Edgar Vincent pointed out that the deficit of the Domains had been underestimated by £100,000, that certain taxes on Europeans, to which the Powers had agreed in principle and which were calculated to yield £100,000 a year, had not yet been imposed, and that a further margin of £100,000 should be left to allow for unpaid land-tax, for which credit had been taken in the estimates, but which it would not be possible to collect. He estimated the sum available for the relief of taxation, not at £450,000, but at £150,000.

Apart from the question of the amount of money really available, another question now arose, namely, in what form should relief be afforded to the taxpayers? The Powers had contemplated a reduction of the land-tax. Nubar Pasha, supported by his British advisers, now urged that, instead of this reduction, relief should be afforded by devoting the available money to the partial abolition of the corvée. The proposal was, in fact, most reasonable.

The abolition of the corvée had become almost a practical necessity, and the only possible method of abolishing it was to throw the charge of providing free labour on the land. It would have been absurd to reduce the land-tax, and, almost in the same breath, to reimpose a fresh tax in order to enable the corvée to be abolished. The Egyptian Government, therefore, issued a Circular to the Powers in which it was requested that, instead of applying the whole of the £450,000—to the nebulous existence of which no allusion was made—to the reduction of the land-tax, a sum of £250,000 should be applied to the partial abolition of the corvée, and the balance used in reducing the land-tax. This proposal was supported by the British Government, who "could not conceive that there was any doubt as to its acceptance by the Powers." It was, however, not accepted.

The next six months were spent in international burrowings of various sorts. The Commissioners of the Debt were eventually consulted, and on July 6, 1886, a Decree was submitted to the Powers under the provisions of which permission was given to add £250,000, which was to be applied to the partial abolition of the corvée, to the limit of the recognised administrative expenditure of the Egyptian Government.

In the meanwhile, Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff and his coadjutors had been abolishing the corvée without awaiting the decision of the Powers. In July 1886, Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff reported that the £250,000 devoted to the reduction of the corvée had enabled the number of men called out to work for 100 days to be reduced from 234,153 (the average of the previous three years) to 102,507, a reduction of 56 per cent. It appeared, therefore, that whilst the diplomatic agents had been discussing whether the £250,000 should be spent, the practical Scotchman had to a great extent solved the question by spending the money. The result, I remarked in writing to Lord Rosebery, was "most gratifying," and an echo of satisfaction was at once wafted back from the Foreign Office.

Here, then, was a solid fact. It was felt that, if once the fellah was relieved from the obligation of scooping up mud with his fingers from the bottom of a clay drain, under penalty of being flogged if he refused to scoop, it would be difficult for the united Powers of Europe to make him resume his former task.

In the meanwhile, regardless of facts, the international mill was grinding slowly on. It might have been thought that, as the Powers had made consultation with the Commissioners of the Debt a condition of their acceptance of the corvée Decree, and as the Commissioners had agreed to the Decree, the goal was not far distant. In reality, it was as yet scarcely in sight.

A pause then ensued. At one moment, it looked as if one of two courses was unavoidable—either to call out the corvée and thus plunge Egypt back again into the slough of the old administrative processes from which the country was just beginning to emerge, or to go on employing free labour and incur a serious risk that bankruptcy would ensue. It was questionable which was the worst of these two evils. There was, however, this much to be said in favour of the adoption of the first course, that a public declaration to the effect that the corvée was to be called out might perhaps shame the opposition into agreement, and, further, that it might stimulate the British Government to afford assistance. It was, therefore, decided to call out the corvée. A public notice to that effect was issued. The result was that public opinion, both in England and Egypt, was moved. A fortnight later (February 15), the French Government intimated their acceptance of the corvée Decree on condition that a clause should be inserted which virtually placed the whole of the Public Works expenditure under the control of the Commissioners of the Debt. The British Government were consulted by telegraph, and declined to accept the French proposal.

The situation was, at this moment, very embarrassing. Besides the corvée difficulty, the British Treasury was pressing for large military payments due by the Egyptian Government. Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, maddened by the opposition he encountered at every turn, resigned his post, but subsequently withdrew his resignation. Little confidence could be placed in the co-operation of the Egyptians, in whose interests the British Government and the British officials in Egypt were working. Nubar Pasha saw the interest Egypt had in avoiding the appointment of an International Commission to deal with the financial situation, but the Khedive and other leading Egyptians were indifferent on the subject. Some would even have preferred a Commission in order to break the exclusive influence of England, and others, for small local reasons, would not make any serious efforts to avoid one. It would, however, have been a stain on the reputation of England if the corvée system had been re-established. A strong plea for British assistance was, therefore, telegraphed to London. In reply, I received the following communication from Lord Salisbury :—

"If you will indicate in what way Her Majesty's Government can assist in extricating the Egyptian Government from the embarrassments now caused, they are willing to consider your suggestions in the most friendly spirit.

"The suspension of the measures for the abolition of the corvée would be so disastrous to the well-being of the fellaheen and the general prosperity of the country that it must if possible be avoided, and Her Majesty's Government will give their best attention to any proposals that may be submitted to them for tiding over the present difficulties, by any temporary measure, or by other means."

After some further communications had passed, it was agreed that, in case of need, the payment of the money due to the British Government on account of interest on the Suez Canal shares should be postponed in order to provide the funds necessary for dispensing with corvée labour. The following public notification was then issued :—

"L'adhésion de certaines Puissances au projet de Décret sur la corvée ayant été subordonnée à des modifications considérées comme inadmissibles, le Gouvernement Egyptien s'est vu dans la nécessité d'abandonner ce projet. Mais le Gouvernement de Son Altesse, considérant la suppression de la corvée comme une mesure à laquelle sont attachés le bien-être et la prospérité du pays, a consulté le Gouvernement Britannique, qui partage entièrement l'opinion du Gouvernement Egyptien à ce sujet.

"À la suite de cet échange de vues, des arrangements ont été pris qui permettent l'emploi du travail rémunéré. La décision du Conseil des Ministres contenue dans 'l'Officiel' du 5 de ce mois a été, par conséquent, rapportée[1] et le Ministre des Travaux Publics a été invité à sanctionner les contrats d'entreprises qui avaient été suspendus."

There are a few important landmarks in the history of Egyptian administration, and this is one of them. As the Circular issued under Lord Dufferin's auspices gave a death-blow to the use of the courbash, so the notification quoted above sealed the doom of the corvée system. Although the battle was not yet over, there could henceforward be no doubt as to the side which would ultimately gain the victory. The fellaheen were no longer to be flogged unless they scooped up mud with their fingers from the bottom of a deep ditch. The British Government had practically pledged their word that this particular Egyptian abomination should cease. Retractation was no longer possible. Nubar Pasha understood the importance of the step, and in words suitable to the occasion expressed the feelings of the Egyptian people.

---

[1] This decision was the notification calling out the corvée.

"L'abolition de la corvée, vous le savez, M. le Ministre," he wrote, "a été un but que le Gouvernement de Son Altesse a visé depuis longtemps, et vers lequel ont constamment tendu tous ses vœux ; aussi, me fais-je un devoir de vous prier de transmettre au Gouvernement Britannique l'expression de la reconnaissance de toute l'Égypte pour le concours qu'elle a trouvé auprès du Gouvernement Britannique dans la réalisation partielle d'une mesure à laquelle sont attachés le bien-être et la prospérité du pays."

Egyptian gratitude is perhaps not always very heartfelt or very long-lived, but there can be no doubt that the debt of gratitude was really due. Moreover, thanks—"Ever more thanks, the exchequer of the poor"—was all the Egyptians had to give.

Amongst the many achievements which England has accomplished in the cause of suffering humanity, not the least praiseworthy is this act, that in the teeth of strong opposition, the Anglo-Saxon race insisted that the Egyptian labourer should be paid for his work, and that he should not be flogged if he did not wish to work.

As yet, however, the victory was not complete. It has been already stated that an annual sum of about £400,000 was required to abolish the corvée system in so far as the clearing out of the canals was concerned. With infinite trouble, £250,000 a year had been obtained. This enabled the system of forced labour to be partially abolished. In 1883, the number of men called out for 100 days was 202,650. In 1886, the number fell to 95,093. In 1887, only 87,120 men were called out. The corvée system having been virtually doomed, the question naturally arose of how to dispense with the enforced services of the remaining 87,000 men. To complete the reform, a further expenditure of £150,000 a year was required. The Egyptian Government wished that this sum should be added to the amount of the administrative expenditure authorised by the Powers. This proposal was not, in the first instance, accepted.

It would serve no useful purpose to narrate in detail the history of the tedious and, at times, somewhat angry negotiations which then ensued. They may well be buried in oblivion. It will be sufficient to say that, as time went on and the financial position improved, an immediate settlement became a matter of less urgency. Eventually, the death of Tewfik Pasha, in January 1892, afforded an unexpected opportunity for settling the question. The Egyptian Government, instigated by their British advisers, wished to signalise the accession of the young Khedive by the adoption of some measures which would be of general benefit to the population. They proposed to devote a portion of the economies resulting from the recent conversion of the Preference debt from a 5 per cent to a 3½ per cent stock, to the abolition of the corvée, and at the same time to reduce the salt tax by 40 per cent. The French Government would not agree to any proposals which involved touching the economies. On the other hand, they were unwilling to stand in the way of a reduction of the salt tax. But they coupled a condition with their acceptance of the Egyptian proposal.

The London Conference of 1884 had agreed in principle that Europeans in Egypt should pay the professional tax, which had heretofore been only paid by Egyptians. After some tedious negotiations, a law applicable to all residents in Egypt, whether European or Egyptian, had been accepted by the Powers. At the time of Tewfik Pasha's death, the tax was, for the first time, about to be levied on Europeans, amongst whom it was naturally very unpopular. The French Government decided to make their assent to the Egyptian proposal relative to the reduction of the salt tax and the abolition of the corvée conditional on the abolition of the professional tax. Ultimately, it was arranged that the salt tax should be reduced; that the professional tax should be abolished both in respect to Europeans and Egyptians; and that the recognised limit of the administrative expenditure of the Egyptian Government should be increased by £150,000 a year, thus enabling money to be found to pay for the free labour which had taken the place of the corvée.

Thus, after a struggle which lasted for eight years, this great reform was eventually accomplished. Begun when Egypt was in the throes of national bankruptcy, it was continued through a long period of diplomatic bickerings, which sometimes assumed an acute form and at other times lapsed into a chronic state of acerbity, and was at last concluded by the fortuitous circumstance that it became possible to drive a bargain over the grave of the dead Khedive. To Tewfik Pasha may be accorded the posthumous merit of having by his death overcome to some slight and temporary extent the demon of international jealousy, and of having thus given a final blow to the hateful system of forced labour which had existed in the country over which he ruled since the days of his Pharaonic predecessors.

So far allusion has only been made to the forced labour which used to be employed in the work of clearing out the canals during the period of low Nile. The corvée has, however, from time immemorial been employed in Egypt to attain another object, namely, to guard the banks of the river during the period of high Nile and thus obviate any risk of inundation. It is essential to the well-being and safety of the country that this work should be performed. It has not as yet been found possible to abolish completely this description of corvée, but the number of men employed every year is small, and is steadily diminishing.

## CHAPTER LI

### CORRUPTION

**Universality of corruption—Steps taken to arrest it—Example of British officials—Diminution of corrupt practices.**

In no country probably has corruption—the canker which eats away the heart of most Eastern governments—been more universal than it was in Egypt during the reign of Ismail Pasha. Ismail had inherited from his predecessors an administrative system steeped in corruption. By his own action, he made this system doubly corrupt. He believed in bribery, if not as the only, at all events as the most effective system of government. Every man, he thought, had his price. He put into practice the principles of which Byron, in one of his cynical moods, has given us a description :—

'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures,
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous ; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader ;
Some by a place, as tend their years or natures ;
The most by ready cash—but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

Ismail Pasha's subjects followed humbly in the footsteps of their master. They took and they paid bribes. From the half-naked donkey-boy, who in shrill tones demanded "bakhshish" to the extent of a piastre or two from the winter tourist, to the highly-placed Pasha, whose assistance could only be obtained by the payment of more substantial sums, all, or nearly all, were venal. The contractor bribed the Minister to obtain a contract on terms unduly advantageous to himself, and would then bribe the Clerk of the Works in order that he should not inquire too carefully as to whether the terms of the contract had or had not been strictly executed. The subordinate official bribed his superior in order to get promotion. The landowner bribed the engineer in order that he should obtain more water for his fields than was his due. The Kadis were paid by both the plaintiff and the defendant to any suit, the decision being usually given in favour of the highest bidder. The Government surveyors were bribed to make false measurements of land. The village Sheikhs were bribed to accord exemption from the corvée and from military service. The Police were bribed by everybody who had the misfortune to be brought in contact with them. The passenger by railway found it cheaper to give "bakhshish" to the guard or to the ticket-collector than to pay for a ticket. As a preliminary to bribing a Moudir to inquire into any alleged grievance, it was necessary for the petitioner to bribe the hungry satellites, who hang about the office of the Moudirieh, before the great man could be personally informed that any petition had been presented. The ramifications of the system were, in fact, endless. Egyptian official and social life was saturated with the idea that in Egypt personal claims and interests, however just on their own merits, could never be advanced without the payment of "bakhshish."

It was from the first manifest that the adoption of more healthy ideas by an administrative service and by a society so thoroughly diseased as that described above, would be a work of time. One of the main safeguards against corruption in civilised countries is that society condemns venality. The act of offering or of taking a bribe is considered dishonourable. The offender, if discovered, is visited by a social punishment often more severe than any which the law can inflict on him. In Egypt, no restraining public opinion existed, even if it now exists, on this subject. Bribery was considered a venial offence. Habits of thought of this kind cannot be changed of a sudden. They are but little affected by the passing of laws and regulations. Nevertheless, it was possible to adopt certain administrative measures calculated to diminish the temptation to accept bribes, and thus both render it less probable that bribery would obtain the objects for which money had heretofore been paid, and also facilitate the discovery of the guilty parties. Measures of this sort were initiated in Egypt during the period of the Dual Control, and were subsequently perfected during that of the British occupation.

In the first place, the inauguration of a proper system of accounts and of audit did a good deal towards putting a check on the malversation of funds belonging to the State. Vouchers were required for all expenditure. Officials were called upon to render strict account of all monies which had passed through their hands. It was no longer possible for public money to disappear as if by enchantment.

This reform was excellent in its way. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the accountant or the auditor can alone put a stop to the corrupt dealings of dishonest officials. A hundred ways exist for eluding their vigilance. To quote a single instance, a high Egyptian official was, on one occasion, charged with the sale of certain lands belonging to the Government. Adjoining these lands, were others, which were his private property.

He sold the two lots together to the same purchaser. They were of precisely the same quality, but the price obtained for the Government was very low, whilst that obtained by the official acting in his private capacity was very high. Thus, a considerable part of the money, which should have been paid into the Treasury, found its way into the pockets of the official who was specially charged to look after the interests of the Government. No system of audit would have succeeded in preventing a fraud of this description. It could only have been discovered by some one who happened to know that the market value of the land sold by the Government was in excess of the sum which the Government received.

In the second place, the regular payment of the salaries due to Government officials has done much to free them from the temptation to take bribes. Also, in many cases the salaries of the lowest classes have been raised. So long as the Government allowed inadequate salaries to their servants, or, as in the days of Ismail Pasha, often left them for months without paying them at all, it is obvious that the temptation of the latter to increase their incomes by illicit means must have been strong.[1]

In the third place, the system of inviting tenders for most public works and for the supply of Government stores, struck a blow in that quarter where corruption on a large scale was heretofore most prevalent.

In the fourth place, the creation of an improved judicature, the careful choice of judges, and the more vigilant control which has been exercised over their conduct, have purified the law-courts.

In the fifth place, with the abolition of the greater part of the corvée, and the regulation of whatever remains of the system of forced labour, the necessity for paying the village Sheikhs in order to be exempted from the obligation to labour disappeared.

---

[1] It was by raising the salaries of officials that Lord Cornwallis put a stop to the corruption which existed in India towards the close of the eighteenth century.

In the sixth place, the organisation of a proper recruiting service swept away a whole nest of corrupt practices.

Lastly, the employment of a number of honourable and capable British officials has probably done more than anything else to check corruption. Their mere example has counted for much. The Egyptians pay an unconscious compliment to English integrity by very rarely offering bribes to British officials.[1]

It cannot be doubted that these measures have been effective in checking corruption. Broadly speaking, it may be said that most branches of the central administration of the Egyptian Government and the law-courts are now little, if at all, tainted with venality. It is not, however, on this account to be supposed that the "bakhshish" system is defunct. It is, of course, impossible to state with any degree of confidence to what extent it still exists, for the people, in spite of every encouragement given to them by the superior officials of the Government, are generally reluctant to complain of illegal exactions, whilst, on the other hand, the corrupt Egyptian official displays such a singular degree of perverted ingenuity in the perpetration of fraud as to baffle the efforts of those whose wish it is to track him down. On the whole, it may be said that although corruption is no longer practised on any large scale, it cannot be doubted that in the provincial administrations, as also, I fear, in some branches of the

---

[1] As a general rule, the integrity of the British officials in Egypt has been absolutely unimpeachable. There have, however, I regret to say, been a very few cases of corruption and dishonesty amongst the subordinates.

Public Works Department, there is still a good deal of bribery. It will be long before all this disappears, more especially in view of the extreme difficulty of obtaining evidence against corrupt officials.[1] In the meanwhile, it can be stated with confidence that at no previous period in Egyptian history has so little "bakhshish" been paid or received as at present.

These, therefore, were the first-fruits of British interference in the country. Torture and the use of the courbash ceased. The corvée system was practically abolished. Administrative corruption was greatly diminished.

How was it that, in these three cases, the efforts of the British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government were crowned with such signal success? It was because they were either free to act, or because, as in the matter of the corvée, they were able, after a sharp struggle, to throw off the international shackles by which they were bound. The more the history of Egyptian reform is examined, the more will it be seen that in most cases success was in direct proportion to the freedom of action of the Egyptian Government, acting under British control and advice. Where no such freedom exists, the result has usually been either failure, or, at best, a modified success.

---

[1] It cannot be too clearly understood that fear of each other has, in the minds of the mass of the Egyptian population, largely taken the place of the fear of the Government, which formerly existed. This is a very important feature in the administration of the country. The latter of these two sentiments tended, at all events, towards the maintenance of public tranquillity. On the other hand, the fear that vengeance will, in some form or another, be wreaked by any one of whose conduct a complaint is made, or against whom evidence is tendered in a law-court, manifestly operates in an exactly opposite direction. Mr. Machell, the present Adviser of the Interior, has, in his Annual Reports, given frequent and very striking illustrations in support of this view. As regards the jealousy often entertained amongst the fellaheen for each other, see *Egypt*, No. 1, 1905, p. 45.

# CHAPTER LII

## EUROPEAN PRIVILEGE

Origin of the Capitulations—Difference between Turkey and Egypt—Abuse of the Capitulations—*Raison d'être* of European privilege—Anomaly of the British position—Impossibility of arriving at any general solution—Minor changes—The right to enact by-laws—The House Tax—The Professional Tax—Proposal to create a local legislature—Internationalism.

It is unnecessary to enter into any technical discussion on the rights conferred by virtue of the Capitulations upon Europeans resident in Egypt. The subject is complicated, more especially as some of those rights rest on the text of international instruments, whilst the precise nature of others, which have been acquired by custom, is still a constant source of dispute. Historically speaking, it is, indeed, incorrect in this connection to employ the term "rights." The Capitulations were originally "letters of privilege, or, according to the Oriental expression, imperial diplomas containing sworn promises,"[1] which were delivered by the Sultans of Turkey, as also by their Byzantine predecessors, to Europeans who wished to reside and to acquire real property in their dominions. A legal fiction had to be created in order to afford a justification to strict Moslems, who were guided solely by Koranic principles, for dealing with Christians on a basis of equality. Christians were theoretically deemed perpetual enemies and, as such, unworthy of peace unless they either embraced Islam or paid tribute to their Moslem conquerors. With unbelievers, "treaties" were impossible, and indeed impious, but it was conceivable that the Commander of the Faithful might, of his grace, condescend to grant them "privileges." The Moslem, unaware that his inelastic faith contained within itself the seeds of his own political decadence, may well have thought that the bestowal of these "privileges" would not undermine his system of government. In this, he was mistaken. As the power of the Crescent waned before that of the Cross, the Frank was gradually transformed from being a humble receiver of "privileges" into an imperious possessor of "rights." These rights were to form a potent instrument for good and also for evil, both to their possessors and to those by whom they were originally conferred. They were notably to contribute, as they are still contributing, to shatter the political and social systems of those who hold to the faith of Islam.

---

[1] Van Dyck, *Ottoman Capitulations*, p. 12.

The rights which have been conferred by, or which have grown out of the Capitulations are not the same in Egypt and in other parts of the Ottoman dominions. The Turkish Government have been watchful of European encroachment, and have, relatively speaking, been powerful to resist it. The Khedives of Egypt, on the other hand, being wanting in vigilance, allowed a plentiful crop of European privileges, which are not sanctioned by treaty, to be drifted on the wave of custom into the position of acquired rights, and if, as at times occurred, they tardily awoke to the consequences of their own heedlessness, they were either too weak to offer resistance, or the impecuniosity, which was the result of reckless extravagance, rendered them willing to barter a portion of their political birthright for the sake of some temporary concession. Thus it came about that the European, who is privileged in Turkey, is ultra-privileged in Egypt. Abuse of privilege follows in the train of privilege itself. It happened, therefore, that in that part of the Ottoman dominions which, more than any other, has of late years been subject to the direct control of a European Power, and in which, consequently, the concession of privilege has been least of all necessary and its abuse most of all baneful to the cause of progress, the degree of privilege granted has been greater, and its abuse more pronounced, than in any other portion of the territories of the Sultan.

Although, however, nothing can be said in favour of the abuse, many valid arguments may be advanced in defence of the use of the Capitulations. At first sight, it appears monstrous that the smuggler should carry on his illicit trade under the eyes of the Custom-house authorities because treaty engagements forbid any prompt and effective action being taken against him. Those engagements have also been turned to such base uses that they have protected the keeper of the gambling hell, the vendor of adulterated drinks, the receiver of stolen goods, and the careless apothecary who supplies his customer with poison in the place of some healing drug. But when all this, and a great deal more of the same description of argument has been stated, there still remains the unquestionable fact that the smuggler, the keeper of a gambling-hell, the receiver of stolen goods, and the retailer of adulterated spirits, represent certain principles. They, and their contemptible brethren, notably represent these principles, that so long as they have not been proved to commit an offence at law[1] they have a right to continue without hindrance in the exercise of their callings, and that before they undergo punishment or molestation of any kind, it must be shown to the satisfaction of some properly constituted and trustworthy authority that they have transgressed the law. One of the great battles in the history of English constitutional liberty was fought over the person of the disreputable Wilkes. Lord Palmerston's treatment of the Don Pacifico case is another instance in point. So likewise, paradoxical as it may appear, the cause of European civilisation in Egypt is to some extent unavoidably identified with the treatment of European ruffians. For, in fact, it is often difficult to do anything towards sweeping away the abuse of privilege without incurring a considerable risk that other equally objectionable abuses may be created in the process of reform. It is reasonable that the Egyptian custom-house official should search the ship of the smuggler for tobacco or hashish, but what guarantee is there that the same official will not, in disregard of the spirit if not of the text of the law, subject the captain of a vessel engaged in legitimate trade to endless vexations? Inviolability of domicile is one of the corner-stones of European privilege in the East. It is well that the Police should be able to penetrate into a gambling-hell and stop an infamous trade, but what guarantee is there that, under the orders of an official incapable of any fine discrimination of character or of circumstances, these same Police will not invade the house of some individual who never in the course of his life held a playing-card or a dice-box in his hand? The careless apothecary should, in the interests of the public, be prevented from poisoning his customers, but his more careful rival in trade naturally requires some valid assurance that he will not be subjected to unnecessary annoyances in the exercise of his profession. Endless illustrations of the same sort might be adduced. Whenever the question of modifying the Capitulations has been broached, the contending parties have always used the same arguments. On the one side, stood the reformer rightly clamouring against the abuse of privilege which impeded his progress. On the other side, stood the European who, if he was politically unbiassed, expressed his willingness to aid in checking the abuse and in furthering the progress of reform, but who, under the influence of profound and, to some extent, justifiable mistrust of Oriental legal and administrative processes, demanded guarantees against an abuse of power before he would agree to curtail the privileges of his countrymen. The guarantees which were demanded were often excessive, and moreover, they generally took a form which involved an extension of the international system of government. The Egyptian Government either would not or could not grant them. Hence, not unfrequently arose a deadlock.

---

[1] It is to be borne in mind that, before any European can be adequately punished, he must be proved to have committed an offence not against Egyptian law, but against the law of his country of origin.

When the British occupation took place, the question of the rights conferred on Europeans by the Capitulations entered into a new and singular phase. The English took Egyptian reform in hand. They found themselves hampered at every turn by the privileges which they, in common with other foreign nations, enjoyed. The English reformer was able to plead that, under his civilised auspices, there would be no longer any danger of an abuse of power, and that, therefore, greater freedom of action could properly be accorded to an Anglo-Egyptian than to a purely Egyptian Government. In the early days of the occupation, this argument availed him but little either with his friends or with his foes. His foes scoffed at it. It is true, they said, that you are here, but you have no right to stay. Even supposing the paramount influence of England to constitute a valid guarantee against abuse, which we doubt, what is to become of the guarantee when you leave the country, as you have promised to do? More than this, are we to abandon our rights merely to facilitate the work of our rivals, who have outwitted us? Heaven forbid. We will not even make those concessions to an Anglo-Egyptian Government which we might perhaps have made to an Egyptian Government, pure and simple.

The friends of the English reformer came to much the same conclusion as his foes, but by a different process of reasoning. If, they said, you would declare your intention to remain permanently in Egypt and to undertake the administration of the country, we should not be unwilling to concede our privileges, for we should then have some solid guarantee against an abuse of power. But as you are constantly asseverating that you are but sojourners in the land, and that your occupation is only temporary, we fail to see what guarantees against abuse will exist when you carry out your declared intentions. There could be no question as to the validity of this argument. Moreover, it was one which the British Government were themselves obliged to recognise and adopt. Hence, the British nation had characteristically placed itself in this illogical position—that whilst its official representative was obliged at times to maintain privilege in British interests for fear of eventual abuse by the Egyptians, he was also called upon by the British reformer to aid in the abolition of privilege in order to further that work of reform in which the Government and people of England were deeply interested. The creation of this singular position may be regarded as a triumph of Anglo-Saxon inconsistency. "England," Montalembert once said, "fortunately for herself, is not the pedantic slave of logic." Fully as I recognise the value of this encomium, I have sometimes, as a humble agent charged with the execution of British policy, wished that that policy was a little more logical.

Under all these circumstances, only one solution was for many years possible. It was that, in so far as the main issues were concerned, there should be no solution at all. Unless the British Government were prepared to assume permanently the responsibility of governing Egypt, it was neither possible nor desirable to assimilate the legal status of all the inhabitants of the country. It was, indeed, painful enough to see the parasitic and ignoble growths which clung round European civilisation, but as Egypt was to be civilised on a European model without being formally placed under a European Government, it was inevitable that, together with many blessings, some of the curses of civilisation should devolve on the country. Apart from the practical and political difficulties which stood in the way of radical reform, it was to be observed that, looking at the matter broadly, the blessings greatly predominated over the curses. The material prosperity of Egypt depended in no small degree on the presence of a numerous European colony, and on the attractions for the investment of European capital. The European would not reside in Egypt unless he could make money by doing so, and he could not make money unless his life and property were guaranteed against the arbitrary proceedings of a Government which but recently was very bad, and which, as he rightly thought, would probably relapse into its former condition if the controlling hand of England were withdrawn.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the question of

European privilege stood, up to 1904, in much the same position as it did in 1882. Nevertheless, if we descend from general principles to detail, it will be found that a few minor reforms were undertaken of a nature to mitigate some of the worst abuses of the system which the English found in existence when they took Egyptian affairs seriously in hand.

The main blot in the system under which Egypt was, and, unfortunately, still is governed, is the absence of any legislative machinery capable of passing laws binding on all the inhabitants of the country. As the absence of any properly constituted Tribunals created, to use Nubar Pasha's expressive phrase, a "judicial Babel," so the absence of any supreme legislature creates a "legislative Babel." History affords abundant examples of countries whose systems of legislation have been bad. Egypt affords a unique example of a country well advanced on the road to civilisation which, for all practical purposes, may be said to possess no general legislative system whatsoever.

Although, however, the system of legislation by diplomacy, in so far as its main features are concerned, still holds the field, and although it is true that the continuance of this system involves an almost complete legislative deadlock, nevertheless, after vast travail, the diplomatic mountain did at last bring forth a small but not altogether ridiculous mouse, which in some degree mitigated the evils necessarily attendant on legislative impotence. Nubar Pasha, to whom must be attributed the merit of the innovation about to be described, pointed out that, apart from questions of the first importance, such as criminal jurisdiction and the right of taxing Europeans, there remained a considerable field of petty but not unimportant legislation on matters relating to what he termed "la vie journalière de la population." Questions were frequently arising as to the extent to which Europeans were subject to regulations edicted by the Egyptian Government on such matters as the maintenance of dykes and canals, the establishment of drinking-shops and places of amusement, the right to carry arms, and a host of other minor subjects, which in Europe are often treated by by-laws framed by some subordinate legislative authority, to whom power has been delegated by the supreme legislature. After some discussion, the Powers agreed to confer legislative rights on the Egyptian Government in respect to these matters, subject to the condition that the Egyptian proposals, before acquiring the force of law, should receive the approval of the General Assembly of the Mixed Tribunals. It was provided that no greater punishment than a fine of £1 or seven days' imprisonment could be incurred for infringing these by-laws.[1] The Decree introducing these changes, which is dated January 31, 1889, is a document of some importance in so far as it represents the first faltering steps taken in the direction of a real Egyptian legislative autonomy.

The arrangement is obviously open to some objections in principle. It is unusual that judges should frame the laws, which they have to administer. But the necessities of the case were such as to render it impossible to attach much weight to objections based on the undesirability of amalgamating legislative and judicial functions. In Egypt, legislators have to be caught wherever they can be found. As a legislative machinery composed of judges was ready to hand, that machinery had to be utilised in default of anything better.

---

[1] In very numerous cases, the penalty for infringing the law is altogether insufficient to ensure general respect being paid to its provisions. Moreover, the procedure of the law-courts is often complicated and unduly slow in action. These defects have become notably apparent in dealing with the illicit sale of Hashish, the use of which is a fertile source of lunacy in Egypt. See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1906, p. 64.

The fundamental idea of the Decree of January 31, 1889, was, therefore, to transfer a certain portion of the legislative functions, heretofore exercised collectively by the Powers, to the judges of the Mixed Tribunals. Some beneficent measures have been enacted under its provisions. To quote a single instance, the Egyptian Government have been enabled to control the sale of liquor in the agricultural districts, and have thus placed some sort of check on the demoralisation which the foreign purveyor of alcoholic and often adulterated drinks spreads around him.[1]

Passing to another reform, it is to be observed that when the British occupation took place, certain direct taxes were paid by Egyptians, but not by Europeans. These were the house tax and the professional tax. No valid arguments could be adduced in favour of exempting Europeans from the payment of these taxes. The reason why they did not pay them was because they did not like paying them. Secure in the support of their diplomatic representatives, they had succeeded in maintaining their fiscal privileges intact. The injustice was so glaring that the Powers were forced into applying a remedy. On March 17, 1885, they went so far, at the instance of the British Government, as to sign a Declaration stating that they "recognised the justice of making their subjects in Egypt liable to the same taxes as the natives." They agreed in principle to a Decree under the terms of which Europeans were rendered liable to the payment of the house tax; they 'equally declared that they accepted the application to their subjects, in the same manner as to the natives, of the stamp tax and licence tax; and they engaged to undertake immediately, in concert with the Egyptian Government, the study of the draft laws establishing these two taxes."

---

[1] For further remarks on this very important subject, see, *inter alia*, *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, pp. 73-76.

Both before and after the signing of this Declaration, the usual unedifying and wearisome wrangling took place. It was not till April 15, 1886, that a Decree was at last issued which rendered Europeans liable to the payment of the house tax.

Although the Powers undertook, on March 17, 1885, to study "immediately" the draft laws necessary for the imposition of the licence or professional tax on Europeans, it is to be borne in mind that the word "immediate" is, in diplomatic phraseology, a relative term. Six years elapsed before, on March 8, 1891, a Decree was issued, under which Europeans were rendered liable to the payment of the professional tax. The law had not, however, been put in operation when, in connection with the corvée negotiations,[1] the French Government pressed for its repeal. There was a good deal to be said in favour of abolishing the tax. In spite of the prolonged study which preceded the issue of the Decree, many of its details were faulty. Moreover, in an Oriental country, a direct tax is always liable to abuse by reason of the untrustworthy nature of the agency employed in its assessment and collection. The Egyptian Government and their British advisers, therefore, decided to rest content with the victory which had been already gained. By dint of strenuous perseverance, they had remedied an injustice; they had asserted the principle that in fiscal matters Europeans and Egyptians were to be treated on a footing of equality; there could be no objection to a relief of taxation which would be applied to Europeans and Egyptians alike. The professional tax was, therefore, abolished by a Decree issued on January 28, 1892.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 418.

To sum up. The results of British intervention in Egypt, in so far as European privilege is concerned, have up to the present time been as follows:—

1. A slight advance has been made in the direction of Egyptian legislative autonomy.

2. Europeans and Egyptians have been placed on a basis of equality in so far as taxation is concerned.

With the signature of the Anglo-French Convention in 1904, the question of dealing with the Capitulations entered into a new phase. The prospects of reform brightened. It became possible to discuss the subject on its own merits without the introduction of irrelevant issues.

I have already stated that the main object of this work is to narrate the history of the past, rather than to discuss questions which now occupy public attention. Acting on this principle, I abstain from entering fully into a discussion of the method under which the existing régime of the Capitulations might advantageously be modified. In my Annual Report for the year 1905[1] I dwelt on this subject, and in my Report for the following year,[2] I sketched out the broad features of a plan, having for its object the creation in Egypt of a Council invested with powers to enact laws binding on all Europeans resident in Egypt. I concluded with the following remarks:—

"I am well aware of the danger of making Constitutions which may look well on paper, but which will not work in practice. It is one against which Lord Dufferin very wisely uttered a note of warning when he was framing proposals for the creation of an Egyptian Legislative Assembly. I have endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to avoid this danger. My wish has been to create an institution which, albeit it will not be free from anomalies, and may possess many theoretical imperfections, will, on the whole, be suited to the present practical requirements of Egyptian political and administrative life. I have more particularly endeavoured to utilise such elements as are available, in order to guard, so far as is possible, against that danger to which, possibly, Egypt is somewhat specially exposed—I mean the danger of making what Burke once called 'a stock-jobbing Constitution.' I am far from saying that I have altogether succeeded, but I trust that what I have proposed may form the basis for further discussion, with the result that any defects which may be discovered in the scheme set forth in this Report may be remedied.

---

[1] *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1906, pp. 1-8.

[2] *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, pp. 10-26.

"Much will depend upon the views taken by the natural leaders of public opinion in Egypt. To the Egyptians, I would say that some plan based on the broad features of that which I have sketched out is, I am convinced, the only method by which they can, within any period which it is now possible to foresee, be relieved of those portions of the Capitulations which retard the progress of their country, and of which they so frequently, and, I should add, so legitimately, complain. To the Europeans who have made Egypt their home, I would say that, in my desire to guard against any reappearance of the arbitrary methods of government against which the Capitulations were intended to protect them, I am no less European than they; that though the rights and privileges which they very naturally prize are taken away in one form, they are simultaneously granted in another form of equal and far less objectionable efficacy; and that, in addition, the inestimable privilege will be granted to them of making their own laws, instead of being dependent on the vicissitudes of European politics and on the views taken in fifteen different capitals of the world by others, who, however much they may be animated by good intentions, must necessarily be ignorant of local requirements. It is only in the 'Land of Paradox' that the bestowal on a whole community of the right to manage its own affairs could be regarded as the destruction of a privilege.

"Before moving any further in the matter, I ask the leading Europeans resident in Egypt whether they wish to support an archaic system of government which has outlived its time, and which acts as a clog to all real progress, or whether they would not rather prefer to assist in reforming that system in order to meet the altered conditions of the country, and thus lay the foundation-stone of an Egyptian nationality in the best and only practicable sense of that much-abused term."

I have now only to express an earnest hope that this question will not be allowed to drop. By far the most important reform now required in Egypt is to devise some plan which will enable laws binding on Europeans resident in the country to be enacted. Until this is done, progress in many directions, where reform is urgently required, will be barred. I would add that the mere transfer of criminal jurisdiction over Europeans from the Consular to the Mixed Courts—a project which finds support in some quarters—altogether fails to meet the requirements of the situation. The main reform required is legislative, not judicial.[1]

The abolition of indefensible privileges is part and parcel of the work of modern progress. In the West, the work of destroying privilege is well-nigh complete, and the next generation will probably see democracy pass from the destructive, and enter upon the constructive phase of its existence, with what result we cannot now foretell. The backward East is still in the stage in which a privilege destroyed, whether it be of a Western or of an Eastern type, may be regarded as a battle won. The constructive period of Eastern political existence is as yet afar, neither can any one of the present generation hope to see what will eventually happen to the curious amalgam of fanaticism and agnosticism, of old-world despotism and latter-day republicanism, which in Egypt, as in other Oriental countries, is now laid on the anvil, and which receives blows from all quarters of such diverse strength as to render it a matter of haphazard conjecture to foretell what will be the shape which it will ultimately assume. In the meanwhile, assuming the abolition of such privileges as those enjoyed by Europeans in Egypt to be an advantage, it may be noted that the Egyptian Government, under British auspices, made one considerable step forward. They placed all the residents in Egypt, whether European or Egyptian, on a footing of fiscal equality. But they have so far been unable seriously to attack the Capitulations, which constitute the main citadel of privilege. These, as in the days prior to the British occupation, remain for the present inviolate. Why was this? It was because the international system of government barred the way to advance.

---

[1] Some further remarks on this subject will be found on p. 568.

This work has been written to little purpose if it has not shown the radical defects of internationalism, considered as a machinery for administration and legislation. In making this remark, however, I must carefully guard against being misunderstood. In condemning executive action through international agency, I do not in any degree wish to deprecate the employment of officials of various nationalities in certain executive functions. The system which I wish to condemn is that under which executive officials are practically nominated by foreign Governments and become, as experience in Egypt has abundantly proved, the political agents of their countries of origin. Not only is there no objection to the Egyptian Government being free to choose their European officials from any country in Europe, but great advantage is to be derived from the adoption of this system. Some solid guarantee is thus afforded that the individuals nominated will be chosen solely by reason of their professional merits, and that they will not be moved by political considerations to overstep the limit of the functions assigned to them. The same remark applies, even to a greater extent, to the case of those in judicial employment. European judges for the Egyptian law-courts should continue, as at present, to be chosen from various nationalities.

The case of legislative internationalism is somewhat different. Egypt is essentially a cosmopolitan country. It follows, therefore, as a matter of course, that if any local legislature is created, it must, if it is to be truly representative, be cosmopolitan in character.

The internationalism which I wish to condemn is, therefore, confined to what may be termed political internationalism, that is to say, the system which admits of the employment of political agents, who, acting under whatever instructions they may receive from their several Foreign Offices, are prone to introduce into the discussion of some purely local question, considerations based on the friendliness or hostility, in other parts of the world, of their countries of origin. Political passions are—or, at any moment may become—too strong to allow of an international system of this latter type working smoothly. "The principles of true politics," Burke once said, "are those of morality enlarged, and I neither now do, nor ever will, admit of any other." An influential school of English politicians have been zealous in supporting the principle of action thus advocated by Burke. "I would not," Mr. Bright said in 1877, "dissociate what is true in morals from what is true in statesmanship." Few persons would wish to speak in disparaging terms of these noble principles. They certainly command my full assent, and, I may add, that during a long diplomatic career, I have persistently acted upon them to the best of my ability. But, whilst our principles may be elevated, our application of them must be subordinated to the facts with which we have to deal. Do not let us imagine that nations and Governments in general are prepared altogether to assimilate public and private morality. Mr. Lecky says with truth: "Nothing is more calamitous than the divorce of politics from morals, but in practical politics public and private morals will never absolutely correspond."[1] Internationalism, in spite of its fair exterior, which proclaims equality of governing power and equitable treatment towards subject races, means but too often in practice political egotism, a disregard of the rights of subject races, and, in the case now under discussion, a decadence in the authority of that European Power on the maintenance of whose paramount influence the advance of true civilisation in Egypt depends. That Power is Great Britain.

---

[1] *Map of Life*, p. 181.

# CHAPTER LIII

## FINANCE

The first bankruptcy of Egypt—Risk of a second bankruptcy—The Race against Bankruptcy—The era of reform—Fiscal relief—Reduction of taxation — Increase of revenue — Expenditure—Aggregate surplus since 1888—The indebtedness of the fellaheen —Distribution of land—Importance of the financial question.

"GREAT," says Carlyle, "is Bankruptcy. . . . Honour to Bankruptcy ; ever righteous on the great scale, though in detail it is so cruel. Under all falsehoods it works unweariedly mining. No falsehood, did it rise heaven high and cover the world, but Bankruptcy, one day, will sweep it down and make us free of it."[1]

In Egypt, bankruptcy, of a truth, destroyed many false gods and pricked many bubbles. Notably, it dashed down Ismail Pasha, the great high-priest of Sham, from that false eminence which he had attained, .and allowed him to be pulverised by the adventurers who were his former worshippers. More than this, bankruptcy, riding roughshod over all who would not recognise the irresistible nature of its action, brought home to the minds of a reluctant Egyptian Ministry that they must needs abandon the Soudan, at all events for a time, because they could not afford to stay there. These and many other benefits did bankruptcy, in its ruthlessness, confer on a land whose government had for many years been one gigantic falsehood.

---

[1] *French Revolution,* Book iii. c. i.

When the British troops occupied Egypt in 1882, one act of bankruptcy had already been committed. In 1879, the Government of Egypt declared themselves insolvent. In 1880, a composition with their creditors was effected. Nevertheless, under the combined influences of the Arábi rebellion and the cataclysm in the Soudan, the Treasury was again on the high road to another act of bankruptcy. There was, however, this difference between the financial chaos of 1878-79 and that of 1882-83. During the earlier of these two periods, the hopes of every well-wisher to Egypt were based on a declaration of bankruptcy. It was impossible to apply a remedy until the true facts of the case were recognised. In 1882-83, on the other hand, it was in the true interest of every Egyptian, and of every sympathiser with Egypt, to stave off bankruptcy, for the remedy which would certainly have been applied, had a condition of bankruptcy been declared, was almost as bad as the disease. That remedy was international government *in excelsis.* Hence, the Egyptian Government had to enter upon what Lord Milner has aptly termed "The Race against Bankruptcy."

The struggle was long and arduous. For some while, the issue seemed doubtful. The final result was a complete triumph. It may be said that the period of doubt lasted till 1888. By that time, the race had been virtually won.

So long as the Egyptian Government and their British advisers were in constant danger of being throttled by bankruptcy, it was hopeless to think seriously of fiscal reform. More than this, any improvement in the administrative system which involved an increase of expenditure—and it may be said that practically every improvement required money—had to be set aside. Attention was concentrated on one object, and that was how to make both ends meet. But when financial equilibrium was assured, the aspect of affairs changed.

When it became known that the Egyptian Treasury was in possession of a surplus, all the various interests concerned clamoured for the redress of long-standing and often very legitimate grievances. The inhabitant of the country pleaded that his land-tax was too high, and pointed with justice to the fall in the price of agricultural produce as a reason for affording him relief. The inhabitant of the town complained of the oppressive nature of the octroi duty. The population in general urged that the price of salt was excessive. The possessor of live stock asked why he should pay a tax for every sheep or goat on his farm. The seller of produce at every market or fair dwelt on the fact that his goods had to be weighed by a Government official who charged a fee for the Treasury and another fee for himself. Why, again, it was urged, should railway, postal, and telegraph rates be higher in Egypt than elsewhere? Why should a boat passing under a bridge pay a toll, whilst a passenger going over the bridge paid nothing? These, and a hundred other arguments and proposals, were put forward by the advocates of fiscal reform.

On the other hand, each zealous official, anxious to improve the administration of his own Department, hurled in demands for money on a poverty-stricken Treasury. The soldier wanted more troops, and painted in gloomy colours the dangers to which the frontier was exposed by reason of the proximity of the Dervishes. The Police officer wanted more policemen to assist in the capture of brigands. The jurist urged that, without well-paid judges, it was impossible to establish a pure system of justice. The educationalist pointed out with great truth that, unless the sums placed at the disposal of the Department of Public Instruction were greatly increased, the execution of the policy of employing Egyptian rather than European agency in the administration of the country would have to be indefinitely postponed. The soldier, the policeman, the jurist, the director of prisons, and the schoolmaster all joined in asking for the construction of expensive buildings. The medical authorities clamoured for hospitals, and pointed out that, without improved sanitation, which was a bottomless financial abyss, there could be no guarantee against epidemic disease. The engineer showed that it was false economy not to extend the system of irrigation, to drain the fields, to make roads, and to develop railway communication. Following on the larger demands, came every species of minor proposal. Would it not be an attraction to the tourists, who spent so much money in Egypt, if a theatrical company visited Cairo in the winter? How could this be managed unless the Government gave a subvention to the theatre? Was it not a scandal, now that a civilised Power was virtually governing Egypt, that more was not done to protect the ancient monuments of the country from injury? What report would the winter visitors to Egypt make when they returned to Europe, if, in driving to the Pyramids, they were bumped over a road which had not been repaired since the Empress Eugénie drove over it some twenty years previously? These, and scores of other questions, were asked, in tones of more or less indignant remonstrance, by individuals who realised the desirability of paying attention to some one or other subject in which they were interested, but who had no clear perception of the financial situation considered as a whole.

Under all these circumstances, it behoved those who were responsible for the financial guidance of the Egyptian Government to act with great caution. It was clear that, as a wave of European civilisation was to sweep over the land, all the paraphernalia of civilisation—that is to say, its judges and law-courts, its hospitals, its schools, its reformatories for juvenile offenders, and so on—would, sooner or later, have to be introduced; but the main point to be borne in mind was this: that, in introducing all these reforms, Egypt should not be allowed to slip back into the slough of bankruptcy from which it had been so hardly and so recently rescued. The principal difficulty was to decide which were the most pressing amongst the many points requiring attention. It was thought that, before the sick man was provided with a comfortable hospital, before the criminal was lodged in a prison built on improved penological principles, before schools were provided, and even before rival litigants could be provided with an adequate number of honest and capable judges, or before the judges could be located in suitable buildings, it was essential to alleviate the burthens which weighed on the mass of the population. Fiscal relief had a prior claim to administrative reform. It was, therefore, decided that, whilst penuriously doling out grants to the spending Departments, the principal efforts of the Government should be devoted to devising means for the relief of taxation.

It is not necessary that I should give in detail the fiscal history of Egypt since the British occupation. It will be sufficient to say that direct taxation has been reduced by little less than £2,000,000 a year. In the domain of indirect taxation, the Salt Tax, the collection of which was attended with great hardship to the poorest classes of the population,[1] the octroi duties, the bridge and lock dues on the Nile,[2] and the tax both on river boats and on sea fishing-boats have been wholly abolished. The Registration dues on the sale of land have been reduced from 5 to 2 per cent. The Light dues have been greatly diminished in amount. So also has the tax on ferries. The Customs duties on coal, liquid fuel, charcoal, firewood, timber for building purposes, petroleum, live stock, and dead meat have been reduced from 8 to 4 per cent. The inland fishery industry has been relieved from the vexatious and onerous restrictions which were formerly imposed on it. The Postal, Telegraph, and Railway rates have been largely reduced. The only increase in taxation has been in the tobacco duty, which has been raised from P.T. 14 to P.T. 20 per kilogramme. There cannot be a doubt that the whole Egyptian population is now very lightly taxed. The taxation is, however, still unequally distributed. The urban population do not bear their fair share of the public burdens. In this, as in so many other matters, the Capitulations bar the way to reform.

In spite of these large reductions of taxation, the revenue has grown from £E.8,935,000 in 1883 to £E.15,337,000 in 1906—an increase of no less than £E.6,402,000.

The expenditure has, of course, increased with the growing revenue, but it has been carefully controlled. In 1883, it amounted to £E.8,554,000, and in 1906 to £E.12,393,000[3]—an increase of £E.3,839,000.

---

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1905, p. 33, and No. 1 of 1906, p. 191.

[2] The development of Nile traffic has been very remarkable. I give a single instance. The number of boats passing the Atfeh lock, which connects the Mahmoudieh Canal and the Nile, in 1900—the year before the abolition of the toll—was only 4564. In 1905, nearly 22,000 passed.

[3] These figures are exclusive of £E.1,238,000 debited to Special Funds in 1883, and of £E.769,000 similarly debited in 1906.

The following three facts will perhaps bring clearly home to the mind of the reader the general nature of the results obtained by the financial administration of Egypt since the British occupation in 1882.

In the first place, I have to record that, up to 1888, either a deficit was annually incurred, or else financial equilibrium was preserved with the utmost difficulty. Then the tide turned. During the eighteen years from 1889 to 1906, both inclusive, the aggregate surplus realised by the Egyptian Treasury amounted to more than 27½ millions sterling.

The second fact which I have to record is no less striking. During the twenty years preceding December 31, 1906, extraordinary expenditure to the extent of £E.19,303,000 was incurred on railways, canals, and public buildings. Of this large sum, only £E.3,610,000 was borrowed. The remainder was provided out of revenue. Moreover, on December 30, 1906, a Reserve Fund of £E.3,050,000 stood to the credit of the Commissioners of the Debt. The Reserve Fund of the Egyptian Government amounted on the same date to £E.11,055,000, of which only £E.2,353,000 had at that date been engaged for capital expenditure. Both of these Funds, amounting in the aggregate to £E.14,105,000, were provided out of revenue.

In the third place, I wish to draw attention to the facts and figures relating to the indebtedness of Egypt. In 1883, the capital of the Debt, which was then held exclusively by the public, amounted to £96,457,000, and the charge on account of interest and sinking fund to £4,268,000. Since then, the Guaranteed Loan, which amounted to £9,424,000, has been issued; £4,882,000 has been borrowed for the execution of public works, and for the commutation of pensions and of allocations to the Khedivial family. The conversion operation of 1890 added £3,904,000 to the nominal capital of the Debt. In all, £18,210,000 has been added to the capital of the Debt. On the other hand, the Daira Loan, which in 1883 amounted to £9,009,000, has been entirely paid off. The Domains Loan, which in 1883 amounted to £8,255,000, has been reduced to £1,316,000. The Guaranteed Loan has been reduced to £7,765,000, a reduction of £1,659,000 from the original amount. On December 28, 1906, the outstanding capital of the Debt in the hands of the public amounted to £87,416,000.[1] The charge on account of interest and sinking fund borne by the taxpayers was £3,368,000. There has, therefore, in twenty-three years been a reduction of £9,041,000 in the capital of the Debt, and of £900,000 in the charge on account of interest and sinking fund.

These facts and figures speak for themselves. Considerations of space preclude me from describing in detail the beneficial results which have accrued to the population of Egypt in every direction from the substitution of a sound fiscal policy for the oppressive and ruinous system of government to which they were formerly subjected. I may, however, allude to one point of special importance.

Lord Dufferin, writing in 1883, alluded to "the encumbered condition of a considerable proportion of the fellaheen lands" as "one of the most distressing subjects connected with the present social condition of the country." There was a tendency, he added, "for the land to pass out of the hands of the present owners into those of foreign creditors."

---

[1] In addition to this, stock to the amount of £8,760,000 was held by the Egyptian Treasury and the Commissioners of the Debt. This stock will be gradually sold, and the proceeds of the sales expended on remunerative public works. In the meanwhile, the interest is, of course, credited to the Egyptian Government.

There can be no doubt of the very great importance of the question to which Lord Dufferin drew attention. In the first place, as Lord Dufferin very truly remarked, a transfer on a huge scale of the landed property of the country to foreign creditors "could scarcely take place without producing an agrarian crisis (Lord Dufferin might also have added, a political crisis) which would prove equally disastrous to the creditors, the debtors, and the Government." Then, again, the arguments in favour of small holdings apply with somewhat special force in Egypt. Owing to the fact that there is not generally any serious congestion of the population, competition rents have not as yet resulted in any grave strife between landlords and tenants. Nevertheless, as the population increases, and the area of cultivable but uncultivated land diminishes, there will be, to say the least, a risk that issues will eventually arise between landlords and tenants, somewhat similar to those which have caused so much trouble in other countries—notably in India and in Ireland. The best way to postpone this strife, as also to mitigate its intensity should it eventually prove to be inevitable, will be to avoid the adoption of any measures which will tend towards the disappearance of the small proprietors.

The political arguments in favour of this policy are no less strong than those of a purely economic character. I know of no measure more calculated to destroy any hopes that the Egyptians will eventually become really autonomous, and that they will exercise whatever self-governing powers they may some day acquire in the interests of the whole community, than the displacement of the small proprietors, more especially if the large landowners, who would take their places, were, to any excessive degree, of European nationality.

The policy which has been persistently pursued by the Egyptian Government of recent years has, therefore, been to endeavour, by a variety of indirect but perfectly legitimate means, to maintain the small proprietors in the possession of their holdings, and, whilst affording all reasonable facilities for the employment of European capital in land development, to do nothing which would tend towards ousting Egyptian proprietors and substituting Europeans in their places.

Of these means, the improvement in the system of irrigation has perhaps been the most important and the most productive of result. The establishment of an Agricultural Bank, which has advanced sums amounting in the aggregate to about £9,000,000 in small sums to the fellaheen, and of Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, which have been the means of spreading a knowledge of scientific agriculture and horticulture, and have also facilitated the purchase by the cultivators of good seed and of manure, have also been potent influences acting in the same direction.[1]

There can be no doubt that these efforts have been crowned with success. On January 1, 1907, only 665,226 acres were held by 6021 foreign landowners,[2] as against 4,765,546 acres held by 1,224,560 Egyptian proprietors. Of the latter, the holdings of 1,081,348 proprietors were of less than 5 acres in extent; the holdings of 132,198 varied from 5 to 50 acres, thus leaving 11,054 proprietors of more than 50 acres. It may, I think, be confidently stated that the danger, which Lord Dufferin apprehended, has been averted.

---

[1] Full descriptions of the creation and working both of the Agricultural Bank and of the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies are given in the Annual Reports which have been laid before Parliament.

[2] For further details up to December 31, 1905 see *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, p. 50. A great deal of the land now held by foreigners belongs to Land Companies. It will eventually be sold. One of the highest authorities on this subject in Egypt (the late M. Felix Suares) assured me that he was convinced that, before many years had passed, almost the whole of the land in Egypt would be in the hands of Egyptians.

Finance is often considered a repellent subject, and, because it is repellent, it has gained a reputation for being more difficult to understand than is really the case. There are, indeed, some few economic and currency questions which are abstruse, but the difficulty of understanding even these has been in no small degree increased by the cloud of words with which writers on subjects of this sort often surround issues in themselves simple. One merit of the Egyptian financial situation was this, that no semi-insoluble economic problem lurked between the leaves of the Budget. The Finance Minister had not, as in India, to deal with a congested population, of whom a large percentage were in normal times living on the verge of starvation. He never had to refer to the pages of Malthus or Mill, of Ricardo or Bastiat. The complications arising from a bewildering political situation had done a good deal to obscure the problems which he had to solve, and to hinder their solution. But, in truth, all that was required in Egypt, in order to understand the situation, was a knowledge of arithmetic, patience to unravel the cumbersome system of accounts which was the offspring of internationalism, and a sturdy recognition of the fact that neither an individual nor a State can with impunity go on living for an indefinite period above his or its income.

The main facts relating to Egyptian finance, when once the thread of the international labyrinth had[1] been found, were, in fact, very simple; when they were understood, they were not uninteresting. "Nothing," as Lord Milner truly says, "in this strange land is commonplace." The subject cannot surely be devoid of interest when it is remembered that the difference between the magic words surplus and deficit meant whether the Egyptian cultivator was, or was not, to be allowed to reap the fruits of his labour; whether, after supplying the wants of the State, he was to be left with barely enough to keep body and soul together, or whether he was to enjoy some degree of rustic ease; whether he was to be eternally condemned to live in a wretched mud hut, or whether he might have an opportunity given to him of improving his dwelling-house; whether he should or should not have water supplied to his fields in due season; whether his disputes with his neighbours should be settled by a judge who decided them on principles of law, or whether he should be left to the callous caprice of some individual ignorant of law and cognisant only of bakhshish; whether, if he were ill, he should be able to go to a well-kept hospital, or whether he should be unable to obtain any better medical assistance than that which could be given to his watch-dog or his donkey; whether a school, in which something useful could be learnt, should be provided for his children, or whether they should be left in the hands of teachers whose highest knowledge consisted in being able to intone a few texts, which they themselves only half understood, from the Koran; whether, if he suffered from mental aberration, he should be properly treated in a well-kept Lunatic Asylum, or whether he should be chained to a post and undergo the treatment of a wild beast; whether he could travel from one part of the country to another, or communicate with his friends by post or telegraph, at a reasonable or only at a prohibitive cost; in fact, whether he, and the ten millions of Egyptians who were like him, were or were not to have a chance afforded to them of taking a few steps upwards on the ladder of moral and material improvement.

---

[1] I use the past tense because, with the practical abolition of the Caisse de la Dette, the financial situation, and notably the system of accounts, has been very greatly simplified.

This, and much more, is implied when it is stated that the British and Egyptian financiers arrested bankruptcy, turned a deficit into a surplus, relieved taxation, increased the revenue, controlled the expenditure, and raised Egyptian credit to a level only second to that of France and England. All the other reforms which were effected flow from this one fact, that the financial administration of Egypt has been honest, and that the country, being by nature endowed with great recuperative power, and being inhabited by an industrious population, responded to the honesty of its rulers. It may be doubted whether in any other country such a remarkable transformation has been made in so short a time.

# CHAPTER LIV

## IRRIGATION

Nature's bounty to Egypt—The work of the Pharaohs—Turkish neglect—Progress under British guidance—Programme of the future—Causes of the progress—Qualifications of the officers selected—Absence of international obstruction—Loan of £1,800,000—Support of the public—Importance of the work.

"If you dispute Providence and Destiny," says an ancient author, "you can find many things in human affairs and nature that you would suppose might be much better performed in this or that way; as, for instance, that Egypt should have plenty of rain of its own without being irrigated from the land of Ethiopia."[1] It may be doubted whether nowadays any one would be inclined to dispute Providence and Destiny on this ground. Indeed, the extraordinary fertility for which Egypt has from time immemorial been famous, which made Homer apply to it the epithet of ζείδωρος, and which led Juvenal to sing of the *divitis ostia Nili*, is mainly due to the fact that its fields are not irrigated by the rain which falls within its own confines, but by the vast stores of water which sweep down the Nile from the centre of Africa. In no other country in the world may the agriculturist be so surely guaranteed against the accidents and vicissitudes of the seasons. It is true that if the Nile is unusually high or low, the cultivator is or, at all events, was exposed, in the one case, to the evils of inundation, and in the other case, to those of drought. But there is this notable difference between risks of this nature and those incidental to the cultivation of the fields in countries which depend for their water-supply on their own rainfall, namely, that whereas no human effort can increase or diminish the quantity of rain which falls from the clouds, it is, on the other hand, within the resources of human skill to so regulate the water of the Nile flood as to mitigate, if not altogether to obviate, any dangers arising from an insufficient or an excessive supply of water. In this highly favoured country, Nature seems to have said to Man: I grant you the most favourable conditions possible under which to till the soil,—a genial climate, an assured supply of water, and a natural fertilising element, which, with scarcely an effort of your own, will every year recuperate the productive powers of the soil; it is for you to turn to advantage the gifts which I have lavished on you.

---

[1] Strabo, Book iv. c. i.

How did Man utilise his advantages? In the early days of Egyptian civilisation, he made great and creditable efforts to turn them to account. "It is certain," says Colonel Ross, "that in old days, there must have been native engineering talent of the very highest order, and when we read of such and such a King restoring public works in a long and glorious reign, there must have existed a continuous supply of good engineering talent which had *carte blanche* from the ruler of the day."[1]

The Pharaohs, it would thus appear, used their talent according to the best of their lights. The Turks, who ultimately succeeded them, hid theirs in a napkin, with the result that Nature, indignant at the treatment accorded to her, minimised the value of her gifts and exacted penalties for the neglect of her laws. In later Mohammedan times, no serious efforts were made to avert drought or inundation. The general condition of Egyptian irrigation at the time when England took the affairs of the country in hand, was thus described by Colonel Ross:—

---

[1] Colonel Ross's *Introduction* to Willcocks' *Egyptian Irrigation*, p. vi.

"There can be no manner of doubt that, up to 1882, Egyptian irrigation was going downhill. Every year, some false step was taken in spite of the engineer. Every year, the corvée lost ground in its out-turn of work, drains were abandoned or became useless, and canals became less of artificial and more of natural channels wholly influenced by the natural rise and fall of the Nile. . . . Owing to many causes, the native talent has sunk so low that, without modern scientific aid, the Egyptians could not work their own canals. They have sunk into a dead conservatism. . . . The absence of repairs, so common to all Mohammedan countries, and the existence of the corvée, or forced labour, have also largely contributed to the lowering of the standard of Egyptian engineers' design and method."

Here was a grand opportunity for the Englishman, and nobly did he avail himself of it. Considering the importance of the subject, and the pride which every Englishman must feel at the splendid results obtained by those of his countrymen whom Lord Milner rightly terms "the saviours of Egyptian irrigation," a sore temptation exists to deal with this matter in some detail. On the other hand, it is desirable to abridge this work; moreover, the subject has been already treated by a highly qualified writer. The lassitude which pervades both man and beast in Egypt during the hot months, when the land is baked by the fiery African sun and windswept by the scorching khamsin; the general relief experienced when the

Nile begins to rise; the anxiety to know whether the water will pass the level of those "low cubits" which, it is said, were designated by the Arabs "the angels of death";[1] the fear lest Nature should be too prodigal of her gifts and destroy by excess what, it was hoped, she would have bestowed by moderation; the revival of the whole country when the waters retire and the earth begins to yield forth her increase; all these things have been admirably related by Lord Milner in a chapter of his work, entitled *The Struggle for Water.* He has also described the care, the watchfulness, and the untiring energy displayed by the British engineers in their endeavours to direct and bridle the forces of Nature. At one time, water had to be economised and hydraulic skill exercised to make the most of a scanty supply. Again, at other times, constant vigilance was required to guard against inundation. During the season of low Nile, a system of rotations was adopted, under which the limited supply of water was turned to the best advantage in the interests of the entire population. The privileged classes learnt to their dismay that the rights of their humble neighbours must be respected. The Barrage — a work which owed its origin to the genius of a French engineer — was, in spite of strong opposition, repaired and rendered capable of doing excellent service.[2] New canals were dug. A variety of useful works were executed in Upper Egypt to guard against the effects of a low Nile. Drainage went hand in hand with irrigation. Before the British engineers had been at work ten years, the cotton crop was trebled, the sugar crop more than trebled, and the country was being gradually covered with a network of light railways and agricultural roads in order to enable the produce to be brought to market.

---

[1] "With good reason the Arabs designate the low cubits by the name of the "angels of death," for, if the river does not reach its full height, famine and destruction come upon the whole land of Egypt." —Mommsen's *Provinces of the Roman Empire,* vol. ii. p. 252.

[2] When the works at the Barrage were in course of construction, I visited them in company with Ali Pasha Moubarek. He was at that time Minister of Public Works, and had passed many years of his life in the service of that Department. He strongly opposed Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff's plan for repairing the Barrage, and was in favour of the costly and wasteful alternative of erecting huge pumps. He remarked to me casually on his way down the river that he had not visited the Barrage for twenty-seven years. He was quite unconscious of the criticism on his own conduct which this admission involved.

Much, however, as the British engineer has done for Egypt, his work is not yet complete. The whole of the cultivable lands in Egypt are not as yet brought under cultivation.[1] In order to attain this object, it is estimated that it will be necessary to store about four million cubic metres of water. The magnificent dam constructed at Assouan, which has already rendered invaluable service to the country,[2] is capable of storing one million cubic metres. Works are now in course of execution which will increase its storage capacity to about 2¼ millions of cubic metres. It is not as yet decided how any further supply will be obtained, but a general sketch of the projects which are worthy of consideration has been given in Sir William Garstin's masterly report of March 1904.[3] Probably, I shall not be far from the mark if I say that, in the course of the next fifteen or twenty years, some twenty millions sterling may profitably be spent in improving the Egyptian and Soudanese systems of irrigation.

---

[1] The question of the extent to which the area of cotton-bearing land is capable of increase was examined in some detail in my Report for the year 1906. See *Egypt,* No. 1 of 1907, pp. 45-47.

[2] To give one example, it is estimated that the conversion, which is now nearly complete, of 404,470 acres of land in Middle Egypt from a system of basin to one of perennial irrigation will increase the rental value of those lands by no less than £E.2,022,350, and the sale value by £E.28,312,900.—*Annual Report of the Irrigation Department,* 1906, p. 178.

[3] See *Egypt,* No. 2 of 1904.

When, eventually, the waters of the Nile, from the Lakes to the sea, are brought fully under control, it will be possible to boast that Man—in this case, the Englishman—has turned the gifts of Nature to the best possible advantage.

The operations of the Irrigation Department have, in fact, been singularly successful, perhaps more so than those of any other Department of the Government. To what causes may this success be attributed?

It has, in the first place, been due to the high character and marked capacity of the British engineers, who were chosen with the utmost care. The superior officials of the Irrigation Department came from India, a country which affords an excellent training for the hydraulic engineer. Armed with the previous knowledge which they had acquired, they studied the various problems which Egyptian irrigation presented for solution, and proposed nothing until they had obtained a thorough mastery of the facts with which they had to deal. So far as I know, they have never yet made a serious mistake.

But the qualifications of the individuals, high though they were, would have availed but little had not their labours been exerted in a sphere where adventitious circumstances were favourable to success.

The first of these circumstances was that, relatively to some other branches of the Egyptian service, the Public Works Department was from the first freed from the incubus of internationalism. It is not to be supposed that the actions of the British engineers were not in some degree hampered by the meshes which an obstructive diplomacy had, with perverse ingenuity, flung over the whole governmental machine of Egypt. Any such supposition would be erroneous. Ubiquitous internationalism, by imposing a fantastic financial system on the country, and by secreting for many years the economies resulting from the partial conversion of the Debt, limited the funds which it was possible to place at the disposal of the British engineers, and thus diminished their power of doing good. More than this, that duality, which was the bane of the Egyptian administrative system, existed at one time in the heart of the Public Works Department, but fortunately in a relatively innocuous form. This duality was, however, abolished at an early period of the occupation. It was felt that, in view of the importance of the Irrigation Department, it should be exclusively in British hands. "It is evident," Lord Dufferin wrote in 1883, "that the present irrigation service of Egypt is wanting in intelligent direction and honest and efficient inspection. . . . Egypt is so similar to many of the irrigated districts in India that it is only natural to turn to that country for advice."

Thus, the British engineers were left free to design and to execute their own plans for the canalisation of the country. They were spared the calamity of having to deal with an International Board. They could decide on the construction of a canal without having to consider whether the policy of Great Britain in the Pacific or Indian Oceans was viewed with favour at Berlin or Paris. This was a great negative advantage. The comparative freedom of action accorded to the British engineers contributed in no small degree to the success which attended their operations.

In one other respect, the British engineers were fortunate. However remarkable may have been their professional skill, and however sound their plans, it is obvious that they could have done nothing without money. Funds were fortunately provided for them. When the London Conference on the financial affairs of Egypt took place in 1884, it was proposed to borrow £1,000,000, to be applied to the improvement of the irrigation system of the country. The proposal met with a good deal of opposition. Doubts were at the time expressed by competent British authorities as to the wisdom of adopting this course. Those doubts were based on reasonable grounds. Excessive borrowing had brought Egypt to the verge of ruin, and it was pointed out that to increase the debt of a State which was then in a well-nigh bankrupt condition was, at best, a hazardous experiment. Others, who had more confidence in the future of Egypt and in the elasticity of its resources, were in favour of a bolder policy. They supported the view which, it must be admitted, at the time appeared somewhat paradoxical, that the best way to relieve the country from the burthen of a crushing debt resulting from loans, the proceeds of which had been to a large extent squandered, would be to contract a further loan, and to apply the money thus obtained to developing the resources of the country. After a sharp struggle, this latter view prevailed. A sum of £1,000,000 for irrigation purposes was included in the loan contracted for the payment of the Alexandria indemnities and other purposes. In 1890, an additional sum of £800,000 was placed at the disposal of the Public Works Department for irrigation and drainage works.

In my Report for 1891, after describing the extent to which the productive powers of the country had been increased by irrigation, I added :—

"The policy of increasing the debt of Egypt, which was adopted seven years ago, has been amply justified. I should be the last to wish that the facts which I have narrated above should be used as a justification for reckless borrowing, but they certainly do show that cases may arise in which a quasi-bankrupt State, if it be possessed of great natural resources, may be placed in a position of solvency by adding to its debt, provided always that the money borrowed be judiciously applied. In cases of this sort, the main difficulty generally is to ensure the execution of the proviso. So far as Egypt is concerned, I have no hesitation in saying that the expenditure of this £1,800,000 on irrigation and drainage has contributed probably more than any one cause to the comparative prosperity that the country now enjoys. It ensured the solvency of the Egyptian Treasury, and until this was done, no very serious effort was possible in the direction of moral and material progress."

Lastly, when once his value had been recognised —that is to say, in a very short space of time—the British engineer secured the support of Egyptian public opinion. The facts were, indeed, so strong as to bring conviction to the minds of the most prejudiced and sceptical. The fellah might fail to realise the utility and insignificance of some of the reforms instituted under British tutelage, but he knew the value of water to an extent which can perhaps scarcely be appreciated by inhabitants of northern countries. No amount of misrepresentation could persuade him that the man who brought to his fields, in a measure surpassing his wildest expectations, the element for which he thirsted, was not his benefactor.

Till taught by pain,
Men really know not what good water's worth.[1]

The British engineer, in fact, unconsciously accomplished a feat which, in the eyes of a politician, is perhaps even more remarkable than that of controlling the refractory waters of the Nile. He justified Western methods to Eastern minds. He inculcated, in a manner which arrested and captivated even the blurred intellect and wayward imagination of the poor, ignorant Egyptian fellah, the lesson that the usurer and the retailer of adulterated drinks are not the sole products of European civilisation; and, inasmuch as he achieved this object, he deserves the gratitude not only of all intelligent Asiatics, but also of all Europeans—of the rulers of Algiers and of Tunis as well as those of India.

---

[1] *Don Juan,* ii. 84.

# CHAPTER LV

## THE ARMY[1]

Disbandment of the army in 1882—History of the army—Mehemet Ali's Syrian campaigns—Ismail Pasha—The Abyssinian campaign—Tel-el-Kebir—It is decided to form a fellaheen army officered by Englishmen—The black battalions—Will the army fight?—Reasons why the reorganisation has been successfully conducted.

In leaving the work of the civilian for that of the soldier, we at once seem to pass from the involved and cautious language of diplomacy to the outspoken behests of the barrack-yard. One of the first points which had to be considered after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir had been fought and won was what should be done with the Egyptian army. The soldier advisers of the British and Egyptian Governments answered this question with military frankness. The Egyptian army, as then constituted, was worse than useless. It had proved itself a danger to the State. It could mutiny, but it could not, or would not fight. The logical conclusion to be drawn from this statement of facts was that the existing army should be disbanded, and another army created in its place. Accordingly, on September 19, 1882, that is to say, six days after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir had been fought, the following laconic Decree appeared in the Official Journal:—

---

[1] In the preparation of this chapter, I have been materially aided by Sir Reginald Wingate.

"Nous, Khédive d'Égypte, considérant la rébellion militaire,

DÉCRÉTONS

*Art.* 1.

L'armée Égyptienne est dissoute.
(Signé) MEHEMET TEWFIK."

Out of what material was a new army to be formed? Could the fellaheen, who had but recently shown themselves so destitute of military qualities, be made into good soldiers? It was impossible at the time to answer this latter question confidently in the affirmative. Nevertheless, the past history of Egypt was there to show that the behaviour of the troops at Tel-el-Kebir did not constitute a sufficient proof that the answer should be a decided negative. For centuries past, Egypt had been ruled by foreign conquerors, who introduced their own or mercenary troops in order to maintain their authority. The Egyptian fellah had inherited no warlike attributes; rather was he the outcome of a system of serfdom and slavery well calculated to stifle all military instincts.

It has been the custom to give Mehemet Ali the credit of having been the first to realise that Egypt had ready to hand in the fellaheen the raw material out of which a national army could be formed. The defeats which he inflicted on the Turkish armies in Syria are adduced in proof of the success of his military policy. To a certain extent, the praise bestowed on Mehemet Ali in this connection is justified. What he did was briefly this. His early campaigns against the Wahabis (1811-18), and his campaigns in Nubia and Sennar (1820-22) were conducted with mercenary troops. Subsequently, that is to say, in 1822-24, being carried away by the *regnandi dira* *cupido*, he required a larger army. It was not possible to obtain an adequate supply of Albanians or Circassians. An attempt made to utilise the blacks of the Soudan resulted in failure, by reason of the mortality which prevailed amongst them when they were transported from tropical Africa to the relatively cold climate of Egypt. Mehemet Ali had, therefore, to fall back on the Egyptian peasantry.

The experiment was crowned with some measure of success. The fellah is hardy and robust. He soon proved himself to be a docile soldier. In 1824, a battalion of Egyptians was sent to Arabia, another to Sennar, and four battalions were despatched to the Morea, under the celebrated Ibrahim Pasha. Then came the first Syrian war, when the veteran ranks were swelled by crowds of fellaheen raised under the most tyrannous of conscriptions.[1] Yet this force carried all before it. There can be little doubt that, had not European diplomacy intervened, Ibrahim Pasha might, after the battle of Konia, have marched to Constantinople with little or no opposition. It was this success, followed by the victory at Nezib over the Turkish troops in the second Syrian war of 1839, which had the effect of raising the Egyptian soldiery to a position of some celebrity as a force of acknowledged value.

Prior to the battle of Konia, the strength of the Egyptian army and navy, the former of which had been organised by French officers, consisted, according to Clot Bey,[2] of 277,000 men, of whom 130,000 were regular troops. Of the regular troops, the bulk of the infantry was nominally composed of fellaheen, but the system under which they were recruited leaves little doubt that there was a considerable foreign element in the ranks. Not only the officers, but also a large proportion of the non-commissioned officers were Turks, Albanians, etc. It is said that, as the result of Ibrahim Pasha's experience in Arabia, it was decided never to promote an Egyptian above the rank of sergeant. As regards the composition of the other arms, it is not possible to obtain accurate statistics, but during the early years of the British occupation there were still many living who could remember that a large proportion of the rank and file of the cavalry were Turks and Circassians, whilst in the artillery the proportion of the latter was still greater. It is to be remembered that when, in 1826, Sultan Mahmoud ordered the massacre of the Janissaries, a large number of the survivors fled to Egypt, where they accepted service in the newly organised army. Again, during Ibrahim Pasha's campaign in Syria, he increased his strength by recruiting locally from the mountain tribes and Bedouins. It is clear, therefore, that the army with which Ibrahim Pasha won his victories was not, in the true sense of the term, a purely national army. A strong foreign element existed, not only amongst the officers and non-commissioned officers, but also amongst the rank and file.

---

[1] "Women were hung up by the hair of the head and whipped till they disclosed their sons' hiding-places. Those that were taken were never seen again. Once a soldier always a soldier, in Ibrahim Pasha's army."—*Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope*, p. 263.

[2] *Aperçu sur l'Egypte*, vol. ii. p. 235.

Moreover, in judging of the importance to be attached to the military prowess of the Egyptian troops in the days of Mehemet Ali, account has to be taken of the state of the Turkish army. Prior to 1826, the armed forces of Turkey consisted of the Janissaries. After their destruction and disbandment, there was, in point of fact, no disciplined Turkish military force left. The disaster of Navarino, followed by the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-29, left Sultan Mahmoud in the position of having to send against Ibrahim "disaffected armies of raw recruits, badly officered and worse generalled."[1] In comparison with these raw levies, the Egyptian army represented a well-organised and well-disciplined force, trained by able foreign officers on European principles, and, moreover, leavened with a considerable proportion of veteran troops who had had experience of actual war in the Morea, Arabia, and elsewhere. More than this, they had in Ibrahim Pasha a leader possessed of undoubted military genius, whose actions bore the stamp of energy, foresight, and skill.

Ibrahim Pasha's successes in Syria afford, therefore, ample proof that a well-disciplined and well-led force will almost invariably defeat badly disciplined and untrained levies, however superior be the numbers of the latter. But to say more than this would exceed the limits of justifiable deduction. To make the result of the Syrian battles the standard by which to gauge the permanent fighting value of the Egyptians would involve a generalisation of too hasty and too sweeping a character. Mr. William Dye, an American officer formerly in the Egyptian service, after reviewing the military history of Egypt, says: "Ibrahim's successes at Konia and elsewhere were due to his generalship, certainly not to any peculiar qualities that the fellah may have possessed as a soldier." The fact that under Abbas I. the Egyptians were driven from Nejd, and that the Wahabite State regained its independence, confirms the correctness of this opinion.

Said Pasha, the successor of Abbas I., at first played with his soldiers, and then disbanded the greater part of the army. In 1863, it consisted of only 3000 men. The personnel was disorganised and the material defective.

---

[1] Creasy's *History of the Ottoman Turks*, vol. ii. p. 437.

On Ismail's accession, his first care was to increase the military power of the State. He believed, or, at all events, he acted as if he believed in the fighting qualities of the fellaheen. Said Pasha had been the first to employ men of fellah extraction as officers, but he did not allow them to be promoted above the rank of captain. Ismail Pasha made an important and hazardous innovation. He allowed Egyptians to be promoted to the rank of colonel.

The first opportunity of testing the value of Ismail Pasha's army occurred in 1874, when a rebellion broke out in Darfour. It was suppressed by General Gordon, who discarded his Egyptian soldiers and mainly employed troops raised on the spot. "The officers and men," he wrote, "are a cowardly set. They are good marchers, and bear privation well, but that is all I can say in their favour. . . . I have not the least confidence in my officers and men. . . . I cannot bear these Egyptian officers. They have no good quality. I like the blacks; now, these black soldiers are the only troops in the Egyptian service worth anything."[1]

Then came the disastrous Abyssinian campaign of 1876, when the Egyptians were, on several occasions, routed with heavy loss. Mr. Dye, in criticising these operations, says: "There was no unity of command, there was no cohesion among the parts of the army. This was due to the want of individual interest among the men in the campaign, a general need of good officers and a lack of discipline, and of any equitable system of rewards and punishments."

That the Egyptian army did not suffer any further reverses during Ismail Pasha's reign is probably due to the fact that it was not again seriously involved in warlike operations. Ismail was assuredly more successful, during the latter years of his reign, in disorganising, than he had been, during his earlier years, in organising an army. It has been shown in the course of this narrative how the son reaped, in the shape of overt mutiny, the whirlwind which the father had sown.

---

[1] *General Gordon in Central Africa*, p 151.

It is impossible for an army to mutiny without its value as a fighting-machine being impaired. We are, indeed, so accustomed to connect military efficiency with military subordination that it is well-nigh impossible to dissociate the two ideas. Nevertheless, the greater or less degree of harm inflicted on military efficiency by any mutiny must depend in some measure on the causes and circumstances of the mutiny itself. If, as happened in India in 1857, the rank and file rebel against their officers, the mutineers must of necessity take the field under circumstances of great disadvantage to themselves. The men are suddenly deprived of the leaders to whom they have been accustomed to yield implicit obedience. The case of Arábi's army was different. The men did not mutiny against their officers; it was the officers who mutinied against the Khedive, and who carried the rank and file with them. It may be said that practically the army rebelled *en bloc*. It is true that a few Turkish and Circassian officers disappeared, the Arábi movement having been primarily directed against them. But their numbers were not sufficient to dislocate the military machine. Moreover, their disappearance only enhanced the lesson, which was rudely inculcated by Lord Wolseley, as to the fighting value of an Egyptian army led by Egyptian officers. Arábi's soldiers had, in fact, every inducement to fight, and every opportunity of showing what they could do in the way of fighting. They represented, or, at all events, they purported to represent, the forces of indignant patriotism calling on the sons of the soil to repel a foreign foe. Their cause was that of the Moslem against the Christian, of the native Egyptian against the upholders of Turkish tyranny. They fought under local conditions of great advantage. Arábi occupied at Tel-el-Kebir an entrenched position of great strength. The attacking force, which had to advance up a "glacis-like slope," was numerically only one-half as strong as the defenders. Yet within twenty minutes of the first shot being fired, the Egyptian force was in full retreat with a loss of upwards of 2000 killed, whilst the British force, which delivered a frontal attack, only lost 459 men killed and wounded. Manifestly, Arábi's force was, in Dryden's oft-quoted words, nothing but a rude militia,

> In peace a charge, in war a weak defence.

Europe was astonished, and some hostile critics, being unable to show that Arábi had in reality been a victor in the fray, found consolation in the fiction that the battle had been won by British gold.

The subsequent history of the Soudan confirmed the lesson which was to be derived from the experience of Tel-el-Kebir. Everywhere the Dervishes drove the fellaheen soldiers before them.

Such were the historical facts with which Lord Dufferin and his military advisers had to deal in 1882. They all pointed to one inevitable conclusion. It was that an Egyptian army officered by native Egyptians was worse than useless. The question of employing mercenary soldiers was discussed. Lord Dufferin wisely decided to put aside all idea of enrolling Albanians, Circassians, or other waifs and strays of the Mediterranean. He laid it down as a principle that the army "should be essentially composed of native Egyptians. . . . Egypt has had enough of Mamelukes and their congeners." The officers were to be supplied from England. An experiment was to be made with a view to ascertaining whether what Lord Dufferin termed "the metamorphic spirit of the age"—aided by a certain number of British officers and drill-sergeants—could achieve the remarkable feat of turning the fellah into an efficient soldier.

Sir Evelyn Wood—who was subsequently succeeded, first, by Lord Grenfell, and, later, by Lord Kitchener and Sir Reginald Wingate—was appointed to command the army. The cadres of battalions were formed by carefully selecting from the débris of Arábi's army the requisite number of officers and non-commissioned officers. The rank and file were taken straight from the plough.

The British officers had an arduous task to perform. Not only had every branch of the military administrative machine to be created afresh; not only had the oppressive recruiting system, which formerly existed, to be swept away and an improved system put in its place; not only had the Englishman to wage unremitting war against corruption and against the other chronic diseases of Egyptian administration and society; but, in reversing the old, and entering upon the new order of things, it was necessary to implant in the minds of the fellaheen the fact that discipline could be strict without being oppressive; that the period of service for which they had been enrolled would not be prolonged beyond that prescribed by law; that they would receive their pay and their food regularly; that the former would never be stopped except for misconduct; that they would no longer be subjected to brutal treatment at the hands of their officers; that any complaints which they might make would be impartially investigated, and that, if they committed any crime, they would be fairly tried and would only receive punishment in proportion to the gravity of the offence. All these difficulties were overcome. Professional skill was brought to bear on all administrative questions. High character and integrity gradually weaned the fellaheen soldiers from the idea that the exercise of authority was synonymous with the committal of injustice. Indeed, the moral reforms which the British officers achieved rank even higher than their administrative successes, albeit these latter were also remarkable. Looking to the past history and actual condition of Egypt in 1882, it might well have been thought that confidence in those placed in authority over him would be a plant of very slow growth in the mind of the Egyptian fellah. Yet, the British officers of the Egyptian army speedily accomplished the remarkable feat of obtaining the complete confidence of their men. Not only, moreover, does this spirit of confidence now pervade all ranks of the army, but it extends to every family in the country. The relations of the soldiers understand the altered conditions under which conscription is conducted, and the regulations of the army enforced. "The reappearance of the fellah soldier," Lord Milner says, "in his native village after an absence of a year in the barracks—not crawling back mutilated, or smitten by some foul disease, but simply walking in as a visitor, healthy, well-dressed, and with some money in his pocket—was like the vision of a man risen from the dead."[1]

Thus, the reconstituted army consisted, in the first instance, only of fellaheen. About 6000 men were raised. These were formed into two brigades, one of which was commanded by British and the other by Egyptian officers. It was intended that this force should mainly be used as an aid to the constabulary in the maintenance of internal tranquillity. The soldiers were to "prevent the Bedouins from causing trouble along the desert border." They were to suppress "small local insurrections."[1] It was not contemplated at the time that they would ever be employed in the Soudan. As, however, events in the Soudan developed and the power of the Mahdi grew, it became evident that the southern frontier of Egypt would either have to be permanently defended by British troops, or that the Egyptian army would have to be increased and improved to such an extent as to render it possible to dispense with British aid. To have relied wholly on fellaheen troops would manifestly have been dangerous. The necessity of stiffening what Lord Dufferin called "the invertebrate ranks of the fellaheen soldiery" had arisen. An unsuccessful attempt was made to raise a brigade of Turks. The nucleus of a battalion of Albanians was formed. They mutinied, and were disbanded in a few weeks. It was then decided to fall back on the blacks of the Soudan. Thus, Lord Dufferin's fellaheen army was eventually converted into a combined force of fellaheen and blacks.

---

[1] *England in Egypt*, p. 176.

The blacks, who join as volunteers, belong for the most part to the tribes who are found on the Upper Nile from near Kodok to the Equatorial Province; others come from the west beyond Kordofan, and even from as far as Wadai and Bornou. Many of them are little better than savages. They are difficult to control, and are as thoughtless, capricious, and wanting in foresight as children. They are not quick at drill, nor are they fond of it, affording in this respect a contrast to the fellah, who, true to his national characteristics, is an admirable automaton. The blacks are very excitable. On the other hand, their initiative, dash, and instincts of self-defence make them invaluable as fighting troops.

---

[1] Some authorities went so far in 1882-83 as to hold that no Egyptian army was required. Lord Dufferin wisely rejected this extreme view.

Before the British officers had been long at work, it was clear that they had created a small army superior in quality to anything which Egypt had heretofore possessed. That army was endowed with all those outward and visible signs of efficiency of which note can be taken in time of peace. Would it, however, fight? That was a question which for some while remained doubtful. But all doubts have now been removed. The history of the Soudan, which has been narrated in this work, enables the question to be confidently answered in the affirmative.

The reasons why the endeavours to form an efficient military force in Egypt have been crowned with success are clear. The British officer has been allowed a free hand; he has had even greater liberty of action than the British engineer. Even a devotee of cosmopolitan principles would hesitate to subject the command of an armed force to the disintegrating process of internationalism. In spite, however, of the success which has so far attended the efforts of military reformers in Egypt, it should never be forgotten that an army composed of Moslems and officered to a considerable extent by Christians is a singularly delicate machine, which requires most careful handling.

# CHAPTER LVI

## THE INTERIOR

**Uncertainty of British policy—Difficulties of administrative reform—Lord Dufferin's Police proposals—Mr. Clifford Lloyd—Changes made in the Police organisation—Nubar Pasha's conflict with Mr. Clifford Lloyd—The latter resigns—Friction in the Interior—Appointment of an Adviser—And of Inspectors—Difficulties of the present moment.**

Cases have so far been discussed in which the reformer was, to a greater or less extent, crippled by internationalism, or hampered by the anomalous nature of an official position in which he was expected to fulfil many of the functions of a Minister without possessing ministerial rank or authority. It is now necessary to deal with a case in which the evils arising from the uncertainty, which for many years hung over the future of British policy in Egypt, come into special prominence. Whether the British occupation was to be temporary or permanent, there could be no doubt as to the desirability of relieving taxation, digging canals, and creating a well-disciplined army which would be able to repel Dervish invasion. The financier, the engineer, and the soldier might, indeed, think that the edifice which each had reared would either collapse at once, should British influence cease to be paramount, or gradually decay when exposed to the dry-rot of unchecked Pashadom. But however that might be, there could be no doubt as to the kind of edifice which had to be constructed; its nature was, indeed, indicated by certain well-recognised professional canons.

The case of internal administrative reform was different. It might have been thought that the work of organising the Department of the Interior would, relatively to other Departments, have presented but little difficulty to the Englishman, with his law-abiding tendencies, his practical common sense, and his freedom from bureaucratic formalism. The main thing was to organise a Police force, to appoint a few Police Magistrates, and to lay down a few simple rules for the relations which were to exist between the judicial and executive authorities. Work of this sort could not surely present any insuperable difficulties to a nation whose dominion was world-wide, and who had shown a special genius for the government of subject races.

Conclusions drawn from general arguments of this nature are often liable to error from forgetfulness of the fact that certain combinations will not bring about certain anticipated results unless it be ascertained that no link is wanting in the chain of circumstances necessary to fulfil the conditions of the required combination. Even Euclid had to assume the truth of his postulates. There can be little doubt that if the conditions under which the work of Egyptian administrative reform was undertaken had been favourable, a success equal to that of which the British administrative reformer may boast in India and elsewhere would speedily have been achieved. But the conditions were not only less favourable than in other countries, they were unfavourable even when judged by the standard of Egyptian intricacy. It was not only that the British reformer was deprived of liberty of action to such an extent as to be unable to execute his own plans. It was not only that he had to pose as a subordinate and, at the same time, to act in a great measure as a superior. Difficulties even more formidable than these had to be encountered. He was in the position of an architect who was told to design a house without any indication as to whether the building was to be a king's palace or the cottage of a peasant. No one could tell him precisely what was required of him. Was he to allow the abominable Police system which he found in existence to remain in force with merely some slight modifications? Certainly not. He was expected to reform, and he was well aware that he could not make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Was he to take the matter vigorously in hand, employ agents on whom he could thoroughly rely, and introduce a rational system based partly on the experience gained in other countries, and partly on the special requirements of Egypt? From many points of view this would unquestionably have been the best course to pursue, but he had to remember—and here the most important link in the chain of circumstances necessary to ensure success snapped in twain—that the British occupation was only temporary, that the authority of the native rulers must not be impaired, and that it was useless to begin the construction of a system which could not be completed in the limited time at his disposal, and which would of a surety fall to pieces directly the Englishman turned his back. For, indeed, a severe relapse could, in this instance, be predicted with absolute certainty. There might be some faint hope that, if the occupation ceased, self-interest would lead the rulers of Egypt to employ British engineers to supervise the supply and distribution of water. It was conceivable, though improbable, that the first outcome of the withdrawal of effective British control would not be the reproduction of financial chaos. But it was altogether inconceivable that the cause of internal administrative reform should prosper in the hands of the Egyptian governing classes, if they were left entirely to their own devices. For, in fact, the centre of gravity of Egyptian misgovernment lay in the Department of the Interior. That Department was the very citadel of corruption, the headquarters of nepotism, the cynosure of all that numerous class who hoped to gain an easy, if illicit, livelihood by robbing either the Treasury or the taxpayers, or, if both these courses were impossible, by obtaining some well-paid sinecure. Every vested interest in the country was sure to be against the reformer, who at each step would find that his views clashed with long-standing abuses, perverted morals, and habits of thought with which he was unfamiliar. Neither could he hope to gain that degree of support from local public opinion which was, however grudgingly, accorded to the engineer. He would be unable to produce material proofs, which could be visible to the eye or palpable to the touch, of the good work he was doing. In order to succeed, he would have to be a moral, even more than an administrative reformer. He would have to be engaged in a succession of conflicts on matters of detail, the mass of which, taken collectively, were indeed of great importance, but which, taken separately, were little calculated to arouse enthusiasm or sympathy on his behalf.

Moreover, besides these general causes, other special hindrances stood in the way of the internal reformer. It was no easy matter to sweep away the abuses of the ancient village system of government, without wrecking the system itself. Still less easy was it to establish a *modus vivendi* between

British ideas of Police duties and Franco-Egyptian ideas of judicial functions. The régime of the Capitulations also barred the way to many useful reforms.

The work of internal reform presented, therefore, difficulties of a very peculiar character. They were the result partly of the actual circumstances with which the reformer had to deal, but still more of the want of reality which attended the whole system of government by reason of the uncertainty of British policy in connection with Egypt.

The question of the organisation of the Police force naturally attracted the attention of Lord Dufferin. He dwelt on the necessity of forming "an intelligent, active, and ubiquitous provincial constabulary," which was to partake of a civil rather than of a military character. The force of provincial and urban constabulary, including two reserve battalions of 500 men each, was to consist of 6500 men. They were to be under a European Inspector-General, who was to act under the control of the Minister of the Interior. General Valentine Baker was appointed to this post; a few European officers were nominated to act as his subordinates.

When I arrived in Egypt in September 1883, I found that Mr. Clifford Lloyd was in Cairo. He had come on a vague roving commission to "superintend internal reforms." Even in Egypt, the chosen home of lax official nomenclature, it was found that this definition of Mr. Clifford Lloyd's functions was wanting in precision. In January 1884, he was, therefore, appointed Under-Secretary to the Department of the Interior.

I have rarely come across any man who, on first acquaintance, created such a favourable impression as Mr. Clifford Lloyd. His appearance and demeanour, his singularly sympathetic features and clear blue eyes, his courteous manner, and the rare mixture of decision and moderation with which he was wont to expound his opinions, all bespoke a man of strong will, who could assert his authority without bluster, and who could be firm without being unconciliatory. Neither was this first impression erroneous. Mr. Clifford Lloyd possessed many remarkable qualities. In spite of some obvious defects of character, this straightforward, honourable, courageous English gentleman was always to me a very attractive figure. In a disturbed district of India or Ireland, he would have been an ideal Government official. But he had not the versatility and tact necessary for the work he had in hand in Egypt. He was unable to adapt himself to local circumstances. Moreover, he wished not only to do the work, but to let all the world know that he was doing it. To quote a single instance of how little careful he was to avoid wounding native susceptibilities, he would not adopt the ordinary Egyptian custom of stamping his letters with a seal on which his signature in Arabic was engraved. He insisted on signing his name in English to all the letters he wrote to Egyptian officials. Moreover, he had never been behind the scenes of a central administration, with the result that he had no experience of how work at the headquarters of government is really carried on. These defects were sufficient to mar his finer qualities, and to detract from his usefulness as a Government official.

One of the first results of his appointment was the issue of a Decree, on December 31, 1883, laying down the nature of the relations which were to exist between the Police and the Moudirs. Egypt was, for Police purposes, divided into three circles, to each of which a European Inspector, who was to be the delegate of the Inspector-General, was appointed. European Inspectors were also to be employed in the principal towns. The Inspector was to be the intermediary between the Police and the Moudir. The investigation of crime was to be conducted by the Police, independently of the Parquet.

The adoption of these measures gave rise to a feud which lasted somewhat longer than the siege of Troy.

On the one side it was urged, more especially by Nubar Pasha, who succeeded to office immediately after the issue of the Decree of December 31, 1883, that whenever a European was placed under an Egyptian, the former would usurp the functions of the latter. There can, in fact, be little doubt that the European Inspectors looked more to the orders of the Inspector-General than to those of the Moudirs, although the latter were nominally their official superiors. No one, therefore, knew who was really responsible for the maintenance of public tranquillity. Nubar Pasha was never tired of complaining of what he called "la dualité dans les provinces." The authority of the Moudirs had, in fact, been impaired, and nothing sufficiently definite had been substituted in its place. They were not allowed to rule according to their own rude lights. On the other hand, they could not, or would not assist in ruling according to the new methods which found favour with their English coadjutors. Under these circumstances, although they were powerless to prevent the change of system, they were sufficiently strong to counteract any beneficial results which might have accrued from its adoption. They fell back on the arm in the use of which the Oriental excels. They adopted a system of passive obstruction.

On the other side, it was urged, with much force, that unless the Moudirs were placed under some European control, all the abuses of the past would reappear. When complaints were made that the people no longer respected the Moudirs, it was replied—in the words of Sir Benson Maxwell, who was then Procureur-Général—that the old respect "was merely the offspring of the terror felt by the helpless inhabitants in the presence of the officer who was armed with the courbash and the keys of the gaol. If the restoration of the power was not accompanied by fresh abuses, the respect would not revive, since the fear on which it rested would not."

If Nubar Pasha had been prepared to accept a certain limited amount of European co-operation and inspection, both at the Ministry of the Interior and in the provinces, a compromise might have been effected. But, although at first inclined to entertain proposals of this nature, he subsequently rejected them.

Apart, however, from the merits or demerits of the new Police system, it soon became clear that two men so dissimilar in character as Nubar Pasha and Mr. Clifford Lloyd could not work together for long. Early in April 1884, the first of a succession of petty crises arose. The points at issue were laid before Lord Granville. "The real question," Mr. Clifford Lloyd said, "is whether Her Majesty's Government will now face the inevitable and appoint an English President of the Council, or by withdrawing me deal a death-blow to reformation in this country."

Now, if there was one thing in the world which Lord Granville disliked, it was "facing the inevitable." He was constitutionally averse to any line of policy which, in Mr. Clifford Lloyd's words, was intended to "clear the way for all that had to be done, once and for all." Moreover, in this particular instance, he could give some very valid reasons for declining to act on the advice of his masterful subordinate. Mr. Clifford Lloyd had been sent to Egypt, not to initiate a new Egyptian policy, but to do the best he could under the difficult and abnormal circumstances of the situation. Of course, if an English President of the Council had been appointed—in other words, if England had assumed the direct government of Egypt—all administrative difficulties would have been solved. Any one, as has truly been said, can govern in a state of siege. But Mr. Clifford Lloyd had not been asked to govern, neither had he been commissioned to introduce such radical changes as would necessarily involve a complete change of governors. His task was, partly by persuasion, and partly by a moderate amount of diplomatic support, to introduce such partial reforms in the existing system of administration as were possible without shattering the flimsy political fabric with which he had to deal. He was constitutionally unsuited for the performance of this delicate task. He could not understand half measures. *Nil actum credens, dum quid superesset agendum*, was his motto. Never, probably, did he show his want of discernment more conspicuously than when he exhorted a Minister, who was pre-eminently opportunist, to resort to heroic measures. Lord Granville was equal to the occasion. He could elude the point of the rapier even when the hilt was held by a skilled diplomatist and dialectician; how much more, therefore, could he escape from the sledge-hammer blows and wild thrusts of this blunt, outspoken tyro in official life. Acting under Lord Granville's instructions, I patched up a truce between Nubar Pasha and Mr. Clifford Lloyd, but the feud soon broke out again. Eventually, towards the end of May 1884, Mr. Clifford Lloyd resigned his appointment and left Egypt.

It was a misfortune that his mission did not prove successful. Had he managed to acquire a commanding influence over the affairs of the Interior, not only would much good have accrued to Egypt, but a great deal of friction, which subsequently ensued, would have been avoided.

I have often asked myself whether, had I supported Mr. Clifford Lloyd more strongly, a more favourable result might have been obtained. If the circumstances of the time had been different, and if I had been able to devote myself more exclusively to the solution of this particular difficulty, it is possible that the conflict between Nubar Pasha and Mr. Clifford Lloyd might not have become so acute as was actually the case. But the circumstances of the time were abnormal. General Gordon was inundating me with violent and contradictory telegrams from Khartoum. Whatever time could be spared from Soudan affairs, had mainly to be devoted to finance, which was then the burning question of the day. The representatives of almost every Power in Europe were banded together in opposition to England, and to every proposal emanating from a British source. On the other hand, Nubar Pasha jauntily threw off all responsibility for Soudanese or financial affairs, and concentrated all the efforts of his astute mind on an endeavour to upset the Clifford Lloyd combination, and to free the Egyptian Government from all European control in so far as the affairs of the Interior were concerned. Under circumstances such as these, the result of the struggle was almost a foregone conclusion.

Even, however, without the special circumstances existing at the moment, I do not think that Mr. Clifford Lloyd could have remained for long in Egypt. Despite his high character and unquestionable ability, he was not the right man in the right place. He was not fitted for the delicate work of Egyptian administration. As well might it be expected that a brawny navvy should be able to mend a Geneva watch with a pickaxe.

It would, of course, have been possible to have appointed an English successor to Mr. Clifford Lloyd, but at that time the difficulties of the situation were so great, and the work was so heavy, that it was desirable to throw a certain amount of cargo overboard in order to lighten the ship. Mr. Clifford Lloyd's place was, therefore, filled by an Egyptian.

It is needless to describe the minor changes which the Police organisation underwent during the next ten years. It will suffice to say that the system did not work smoothly. The old cause of complaint always existed, namely, that the presence of European Police officers in the provinces diminished the authority of the Moudirs. One Egyptian Minister succeeded another, but all adopted an attitude of hostility to, or at best of surly acquiescence with the new system.

At last, as generally happens in such cases, an opportunity came of settling the question. When Nubar Pasha assumed office in the summer of 1894, he at once took up the matter. A plan, having for its object the decentralisation of the Police, which was to be left in Egyptian hands, coupled with the establishment of an efficient European control at the Ministry of the Interior, was elaborated and eventually accepted. An English "Adviser" was appointed, whose functions were to co-operate with the Minister in charge of the Department. Subsequently, a very few young Englishmen, who had been specially trained for Egyptian service, were appointed to be Inspectors.

Since the change in 1894, a great improvement has unquestionably taken place in the Administration of the Interior. Nevertheless, the old difficulty still remains. The presence of British Inspectors in the Provinces tends to weaken the authority and to diminish the sense of responsibility of the Moudirs. On the other hand, it is certain that the total withdrawal of the Inspectors from the provinces would be attended with a serious risk that many of the abuses of the past would reappear, and, generally, that great administrative confusion would arise. It is, in fact, impossible to avoid altogether the disadvantages of over-interference, without incurring the evils which would result from total non-interference. The most that can be done is to effect the best compromise of which the circumstances admit. But, in working a system where so much depends upon the characters and idiosyncrasies of the individuals concerned, it is inconceivable that complete success can be attained.

A heroic remedy, which has occasionally been suggested, would be to appoint British Moudirs. I greatly deprecate the adoption of this measure. It would be a very distinct step backwards in the direction of dissociating the Egyptians from the government of their own country. Moreover, although I do not mean to say that all the Inspectors are equally tactful and efficient, or that all the Moudirs possess every qualification which could be wished, I am convinced that the former are steadily gaining knowledge and experience of the country, and that the latter are generally far more efficient than their predecessors of a few years ago. If this be so, and if, as I hold, a policy of complete non-interference is not only open to great objections, but would also be very unpopular with the mass of the population, there is nothing for it but to continue to work on the broad lines of the present system, with all its recognised defects. All that can be done is to watch its operation, to choose the Moudirs with the utmost care, to constantly impress on the European Inspectors the necessity of dealing in a spirit of friendliness and sympathy with the Egyptian authorities, and to move—whenever this can prudently be done—in the direction of diminishing rather than of enhancing the degree of British interference in the details of the administration.[1]

---

[1] I must refer those who wish for more detailed information as regards the work of the Interior, in connection with village organisation and other matters, to my Annual Reports.

# CHAPTER LVII

## SUB-DEPARTMENTS OF THE INTERIOR

1. PRISONS—State of the prisons in 1882—Reform—2. SLAVERY—The Slave Trade and slavery—The Convention of 1877—The Slave Home—Change of opinion in Egypt—Success of the Convention—3. MEDICAL AND SANITARY ADMINISTRATION—Egyptian superstitions—Clot Bey—State of things in 1883—Improvements effected—Sanitary reform — Impediments to progress — Treatment of epidemics.

### 1. *Prisons.*

THOSE who have only a slight acquaintance with the ways of Eastern Governments may perhaps be astonished to learn of the existence of a Turkish Habeas Corpus Act. In reality, however, this is no cause for surprise. Contact with Europe has led to the adoption of the forms and the incorporation of much of the jargon of Western civilisation, but has been powerless to make the East imbibe its spirit. Oriental rulers have, indeed, discovered a plan, by the adoption of which, as they think, they can satisfy European reformers without incurring all the consequences which would result from the execution of a reforming policy. Broadly speaking, this plan consists in passing a law, and then acting as if the law had never been passed.[1]

---

[1] "No reform is clamoured for which does not already figure in the statute-book; no complaint is made which cannot be disproved by statistics. . . . Eastern peoples, not only in Turkey but in many other countries, form a solid national conspiracy against foreign and Christian influences. They know when their Government is forced to

According to Ottoman law, an accused person must be examined within twenty-four hours of his arrest by competent officials; when the charge against him is formulated, the conditions under which he may be admitted to bail are clearly laid down.

So much for the theory. The practice is different. Sir Herbert Chermside and Mr. Beaman, who were deputed by Lord Dufferin to inquire into the state of the Egyptian prisons in 1882, wrote: "It is impossible, in the face of the deluge of complaints as to no examination or trial during months and years of confinement, which has met us, to avoid concluding that the present system of arrest and sending to trial is, in practice, a flagrant injustice, and aggravated by venality, tyranny, and personal vindictiveness."

Two causes were at work during the pre-occupation days, one of which tended unduly to deplete, and the other unduly to crowd the prisons. On the one hand, a number of offences were committed for which no one was ever punished. This immunity from punishment tended to keep the prisons empty. On the other hand, when the authorities took cognisance of an offence, it was their practice to arrest not only every one who might possibly have been implicated in it, but also a number of their relations, as well as all the witnesses, whether they were on the side of the prosecution or of the defence. The result of this twofold injustice was that, whilst a number of persons were free who should have been in prison, at the same time a number of persons were in

---

give way against its will; they know when orders are meant to be obeyed, and answer the rein in a moment; they also know when they are not meant to be obeyed, but are what are called 'watery commands,' and then they do not obey them. . . . In the end, this national conspiracy, this 'invincible inertia,' nearly always wins the day."—*Turkey in Europe*, p. 138.

prison who should have been free;[1] and, once in prison, no distinction was made between those who had been convicted, those who were awaiting trial, and others, such as witnesses, who were detained, not for any offence, but because it was more convenient to keep them in prison, in case they were wanted, than to set them at liberty. "In the East," Sir Herbert Chermside wrote, "every man is treated as if guilty of the offence of which he is accused until he has established his innocence."

The condition of the prisons was horrible in the extreme. "No report," Mr. Beaman said, "can convey the feeblest impression of the helpless misery of the prisoners, who live for months, like wild beasts, without change of clothing, half-starved, ignorant of the fate of their families and bewailing their own. They only look forward to the day of their trial as synonymous with the day of their release, but the prospect of its advent is too uncertain to lend much hope to their wretchedness. From the moment of entering the prison, even on the most trifling charge, they consider themselves lost. It is impossible for them to guess at the time when a new official may begin to clear off the cases in his district, or when the slow march of the administration may reach them. It may be weeks, it may be months, and it may be years; many of them have long since ceased to care which."

In those days, the only hope of the Egyptian prisoner lay in the possession of money. A moderate bribe to the gaoler would insure relatively good treatment in prison. A further sum to the judge might hasten the trial. The tariff for an acquittal was naturally somewhat higher.

---

[1] "It is esteemed an act of Imperial clemency when the Sultan orders the release from prison of 'all persons against whom there is no charge.'"—*Turkey in Europe*, p. 140.

There is, however, nothing surprising in all this. The state of the Egyptian prisons in 1882 does not seem to have been much worse than that of the prisons in England before those reforms were undertaken which have made the name of John Howard for ever famous.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the series of reforms in this Department which have been effected since 1882. It will suffice to say that, here as elsewhere, order and justice have taken the place of confusion and tyranny. The old prisons have been improved and placed in a sanitary condition. Large sums have been spent in the construction of new prisons. Special prisons have been constructed for women. Reformatories for juvenile offenders have been instituted. The prisoners have been provided with proper food and clothing. Many of them are taught trades. These reforms took time. Even now (1907) the prison accommodation can scarcely be said to be adequate to meet all the requirements of the country.

The only criticism now directed against the Prison Administration is—to quote the words of Coles Pasha, to whom the credit of reforming this branch of the Public Service is mainly due—that, in the eyes of many "prison life is not sufficiently deterrent, and that the swing of the pendulum has carried the Administration too far in the direction of humanity, if not of luxury." There may possibly be some truth in this criticism, but there can, of course, be no question of reverting to the brutal methods of the past in order to make punishment more deterrent. In Egypt, as elsewhere, the tendency of the best qualified penological experts is to move in the direction of reforming rather than in that of administering very severe punishment to criminals.

## 2. *Slavery.*

There is an obvious distinction between the Slave Trade and Slavery. Both are bad; but, whereas nothing can be said in defence of the Slave Trade, some mitigating pleas may be advanced as regards domestic slavery, which, although they in no degree justify the existence of the institution, are of a nature to temper the zeal of the reformer who aspires towards its immediate abolition.

Most Englishmen have been made familiar with the horrors of the Slave Trade. They have been told how peaceable villages in Central Africa have been invaded by parties of ruffianly Arab raiders; how the older inhabitants, male and female, have been shot down without mercy; how the girls and boys—the latter after undergoing the most cruel process of mutilation to which any man can be subjected[1]—have been marched long distances down to the coast; how numbers died of exhaustion on the way; and how eventually the survivors were sold to be the household servants of the Turkish and Egyptian Pashas.[2] Some arguments, more or less specious, can generally be found to defend most of the worst abuses which exist, or at times have existed in the world. The Slave Trade stands alone as an abomination which is incapable of any defence whatsoever, unless it be the vicious plea that Pashas require servants, and that they are unable to obtain them in sufficient numbers, or at a sufficiently low price, by any other means than those to which allusion is made above.

---

[1] The high price paid for these unfortunate boys is due to the fact that a large proportion of them die under the process of mutilation. The operation is performed in the most ruthless and barbarous manner by persons devoid of any surgical skill.

[2] It is a mistake to suppose that the black girls from Central Africa always become the concubines of their masters. It would be an exaggeration to say that cases of this sort never occur, but they are rare. The wives and concubines of the Pashas come almost exclusively from Circassia and Abyssinia. The blacks are almost always bought with the object of being employed as household servants.

The case of domestic slavery, considered independently of the Slave Trade, is different. A slave in the Ottoman dominions lies under certain civil disabilities which shock the European's sense of justice; nevertheless, in practice, the disabilities in question lie lightly on the slaves themselves. Moreover, under unreformed Ottoman law, the slave is not free to carry his labour to any market which he chooses. This is unjust. On the other hand, as a general rule, slaves are well treated;[1] they lead an easy life and are not overworked. On the whole, save that the stigma of slavery is attached to them—a consideration which is all-important from the European, but relatively unimportant from the Eastern point of view[2]—it may be doubted whether in the majority of cases the lot of slaves in Egypt is, in its material aspects, harder than, or even as hard as that of many domestic servants in Europe. Indeed, from one point of view, the Eastern slave is in a better position than the Western servant. The latter can be thrown out of employment at any moment. In Egypt, on the other hand, although under the existing law, which is the outcome of contact with the West, the slave can, if he chooses, free himself from his master, no provision is made for the converse case of a master who wishes to get rid of a slave. Custom, based on religious law, obliges him to support his slave. Cases are frequent of masters who would be glad to get rid of their slaves, but who are unable to do so because the latter will not accept the gift of liberty. A moral obligation, which is universally recognised, rests on all masters to support aged and infirm slaves till they die; this obligation is often onerous in the case of those who have inherited slaves from their parents or other relatives.

---

[1] There are, however, exceptions. I remember a case which occurred early in 1885. It was brought to my notice that a white slave girl in the harem of a lady of high social position in Cairo was very badly treated, and that she wished to escape. With some difficulty, I obtained an interview with her at my house. She declared to me most positively that she was very well treated, and that she wished to return to the harem. I had no alternative but to comply with her request. Shortly afterwards, I went to England. On my return, the girl had disappeared. There were good reasons for believing that the statement she made to me was untrue, that she had been promised a large sum of money if she made it, that she was never paid the money, and that, on my departure from Egypt, she was beaten to death. But in cases of this sort it is, of course, impossible to obtain positive proof.

[2] Many Egyptians of the highest social classes are the sons of slave mothers, who are often married to their masters after having borne a child.

On these grounds, therefore, some distinction must be drawn between the Slave Trade and Slavery. It is, however, none the less true that the one is intimately connected with the other. Where there is a demand, a supply will follow. If the institution of slavery did not exist, the Slave Trade would perish. In order to check the Slave Trade, if for no other reason, it is necessary to do all that is possible to discourage slavery. The object of the English reformer has, therefore, been twofold. In the first place, he has endeavoured to prevent slaves from being brought into the country, and has thus to some extent cut off the supply. In the second place, he has endeavoured to wean the slave-owning classes from their ancient habits, and has thus done much to diminish the demand.

Whether Ismail Pasha was moved by a sincere desire to abolish an infamous traffic, or whether he merely wished to throw dust in the eyes of humanitarian Europe, it is certain that to him belongs the credit of having given the first blow to the institution of slavery in Egypt. In August 1877, a Convention was signed between the Egyptian Government and Lord Vivian, acting on behalf of the British Government. Under the terms of this

Convention and the annexes attached to it, the Slave Trade was formally forbidden on Egyptian territory. Slave dealers were to be tried by court martial, and were rendered liable to severe penalties. The sale of slaves from family to family was to be tolerated until August 1884, after which time it was declared illegal. Any slave who chose to claim his or her liberty could obtain it on application to certain Bureaux of Manumission which were specially created.

It is now necessary to explain a point in connection with the institution of slavery in Egypt, the importance of which is often insufficiently recognised by those who are specially interested in this subject. On February 6, 1883, Lord Dufferin wrote :—

"Slavery might be abolished by Khedivial Decree, but a Convention is so much more formal and binding that it would seem preferable. I would, therefore, propose that a new Convention be entered into between Great Britain and Egypt, by which slavery would entirely cease in Egypt and its Dependencies seven years after the date of signature."

It may be doubted whether Lord Dufferin fully realised the obstacles which must have been encountered had any endeavour been made to give effect to his proposal. In 1883, those obstacles were practically insurmountable. Slavery in the East does not exist by virtue of any special Decree or law emanating either from the executive governments or from the legislatures under which Eastern countries are governed. It exists because its existence is authorised by the Sacred Law of Islam, which is as immutable as were the laws of the Medes and Persians. That law cannot be abrogated by any Khedivial Decree, and still less by any Convention signed with a Christian Power, Kadis, Muftis, and Ulema would regard Decrees and Conventions, which infringed the fundamental religious law of Islam, much as devout French Catholics must have regarded the attempts of Anacharsis Clootz and other maniacs of the French revolution to effect the legal abolition of the Christian religion. They would altogether decline to recognise the validity of a law which, inasmuch as it altered the Sheriat, would in their eyes be considered as an attempt to justify sacrilege.

It is true that, some fifty years ago, the rulers of India ignored the Mohammedan religious law. In 1843, an Act was passed by the Indian legislature, which provided that the status of slavery should not be recognised by any law-court in the country, criminal or civil. But, although in the abstract, the Sheriat may be as inviolable at Calcutta as it is at Cairo, the question of the total and immediate abolition of slavery presented itself, from a practical point of view, in a very different aspect in Egypt under Lord Dufferin from that which obtained under Lord Ellenborough in India. In 1843, the English had been for half a century in India. They were the absolute rulers of the country. The law-courts, which they had established, inspired confidence. Moreover, they had to deal, not with one compact body of Mohammedans, but with a Mohammedan population which, though numerous, possessed little or no cohesion, owing to the fact that it was merged amongst the members of a more numerous and more tolerant creed. Under such circumstances, a radical reform, such as that effected in 1843, becomes possible. Under the political conditions which prevailed in Egypt in 1883, it would have been impossible, or at all events in the highest degree imprudent, to have attempted to follow the Indian precedent.

Under the Sheriat, a slave cannot marry or inherit property without the consent of his master. When, therefore, it is said that, under the Convention of 1877, any slave was able to obtain his or her liberty on application to a Manumission Bureau, it is to be understood that the term "liberty" is used in a restricted sense. The Convention gave to the slave the right to go wherever he pleased, and to work or remain idle as he pleased. But it did not allow him to marry or to inherit property without the consent of his master. To this extent, in spite of nineteenth-century intervention, Islam of the seventh century still held the manumitted slave in its grip.

It was inevitable that the British occupation should give a fresh stimulus to the work of emancipation which was begun in 1877. One important consideration, however, tempered the zeal of the reformer. Almost all the slaves in Egypt were women. When they left the harems, having no means of support, they either starved or fell into a life of vice. Under these circumstances, those who were desirous of hastening the work of emancipation hesitated to act for fear of producing evils as bad as, if not worse than slavery. To remedy this defect, money was subscribed in England with the help of the Anti-Slavery Society, who, in this connection, did some excellent work. With the money thus obtained, which was supplemented by a grant from the Egyptian Treasury, a Home for Freed Female Slaves was established at Cairo. The manumitted slaves are now housed and fed in this Home until employment can be obtained for them.[1] This system has worked well. Respectable Mohammedans constantly apply to the Home for domestic servants.

---

[1] So few slaves now apply to the Manumission Bureaux that it will probably soon become a question whether the Home for Freed Slaves need be any longer maintained.

It would be probably an exaggeration to say that any public opinion adverse to slavery has been evoked in Egypt. The purchase and employment of slaves is not generally regarded with any moral reprobation, neither, under all the circumstances which exist, would it be reasonable to expect any such reprobation. In 1894, no less a person than the President of the Legislative Council, who was a Turco-Egyptian, was arraigned before a Court-martial for purchasing slaves, and only escaped imprisonment on account of his bad health and advanced years. Nevertheless, the slavery reforms instituted under British auspices have produced a notable change in the behaviour, if not in the opinions, of the slave-owning classes in Egypt. There are no longer any slave-markets. The purchase of a slave is a criminal offence attended with danger both to the buyer and to the seller. The slave routes are carefully watched. It is only with great difficulty that a few slaves are occasionally smuggled into the country. The result of these measures has been, not only that it has become year by year more difficult to obtain slaves, but that also, when any clandestine purchase is effected, a price considerably higher than that which formerly ruled has to be paid. The slave-owner is, therefore, beginning to ask himself whether slave labour is not, after all, more expensive as well as more troublesome than free labour, and whether it is worth while, besides committing a criminal act for which he may be severely punished, to pay a considerable sum for a slave girl who can, on the morrow of her purchase, walk out of the harem and obtain, not only her freedom, but also the strong support of the British representative if any attempt is made to tamper with her liberty of action.

Thousands of slaves have, during the last few years, been granted their certificates of freedom. Those who remain in the harems know that they can obtain their liberty if they choose to ask for it. In the meanwhile, as very few fresh slaves are imported, and as the numbers born in slavery must certainly be inconsiderable in proportion to the number of those who have been manumitted, the supply of slaves is gradually falling short of the demand. Very few eunuchs are now to be found in Egypt. The objections to their employment from the Egyptian point of view are that a very high price has to be paid for them; that, on account of their bad physique, they are useless as servants; and that they are liable to die of consumption. It may safely be asserted that slavery in Egypt, although it will take a long time to die out completely, is moribund. It may be asserted with an almost equal degree of confidence that both the Slave Trade and slavery would revive if vigilance were relaxed.

From one point of view, the particular reform of the Egyptian social and administrative system now under discussion is remarkable. In view of the state of the Mohammedan law, of the fact that slavery, although discouraged by the founder of the Mohammedan religion, has, by a perverted view of his original preaching, become associated with the distinctive features of the Mohammedan faith; and of the further fact that material interests of some importance were involved in the abolition of slavery—it might well have been thought that the introduction of Western ideas in connection with this subject would have encountered opposition of a somewhat specially strong description. As a matter of fact, the opposition has been mild, and has been easily overcome. A great change has been going on insensibly. It has, indeed, been almost imperceptible to those who, it might be thought, were most interested in the maintenance of the existing abuse. No heroic measures have been adopted. Nothing has been done to clash with Mohammedan opinions and prejudices. Nevertheless, a considerable measure of success has been attained. This result is due to the fact that the Convention of 1877 was admirably adapted to achieve, in a prudent and unostentatious manner, the object for which it was intended. The late Lord Vivian's name is rarely, if ever, mentioned as one of the chief initiators of Egyptian reform. Yet it is due to the wise moderation of the Convention which he negotiated that slavery has been gradually disappearing from Egypt. At the commencement of this work, some words of Bacon were quoted as an example of the general principles which should guide the reformer in an Eastern country: "It were good that men in their innovations would follow the example of Time itself, which, indeed, innovateth greatly, but quietly and by degrees scarce to be perceived." That is the principle which has been adopted in connection with the abolition of slavery in Egypt. Lord Vivian's action in this matter was based on strictly Baconian principles.

In 1895, a fresh Slavery Convention was signed between the British and Egyptian Governments. It gave precision to the existing law, and in some respects altered the procedure. Moreover, it provided that it was a criminal offence to interfere in any way with the full liberty of action of an enfranchised slave. This change is important. It practically effects by a side wind all that was done by the Indian Act of 1843. Any one in Egypt who prevents a freed slave from marrying or from inheriting property is now liable to imprisonment.

A scholarly writer, who has paid special attention to this subject, calls slavery the "Nemesis of

Nations." "Civilisation," he says, "begins with the crack of the slave whip."[1] It may be placed to the credit of latter-day civilisation that the crack of that whip can no longer be heard in Egypt.

### 3. *Medical and Sanitary Administration.*

Whatever may be the case at present, it is certain that but a few years ago the lowest classes in Egypt rarely sought for medical aid until the patient was well-nigh moribund. The recipes of village barbers and of the old women, who were sometimes called in to attend the sick, as often as not aggravated the condition of the patient.[2] Great faith was entertained in the healing properties of written charms. These generally consisted of passages of the Koran for Mohammedans, or from the Psalms and Gospels for Copts, which were intermingled with numerical combinations, diagrams, and symbols. Persons of all creeds, being possessed of evil spirits, were said to be cured at certain Coptic convents, notably at the convent of St. Damianus[3] near Mansourah, and at that of St. Michael near Birket-el-Sab.

An operation which was "warranted to cure all diseases which were not fatal," could be performed if the sick person was fortunate enough to become possessed of a brass bowl, made in a peculiar fashion, and to the rim of which forty-one oblong strips of brass were attached. On each of these strips the words "In the name of the most merciful God," were inscribed. This bowl had to be filled on a Friday night with Nile water, into which some drugs and nuts were thrown. The sick person was instructed to stand in a basin of water before sunrise on the following morning, to drink out of the bowl, and to eat the nuts, throwing the shells behind his back. This operation had to be repeated on three consecutive Fridays.

---

[1] Paterson's *Nemesis of Nations*, p. 53.

[2] The instances of superstition in this chapter are mainly taken from a pamphlet entitled *Medical Matters in Egypt*, written by Dr. F. M. Sandwith in August 1884. Dr. Sandwith's researches revealed a stage of medical knowledge amongst the poorer classes not materially in advance of that reached in Pharaonic times. M. Maspero (*Causeries d'Égypte*, p. 313) says that an ancient Egyptian medical practitioner was obliged to be "aussi expert en exorcismes qu'en formules de pharmacie."

[3] St. Damianus and his brother St. Cosmos were both doctors. They underwent martyrdom during the persecution of Diocletian, about A.D. 303. Pope Felix IV. built a Basilica in their honour at Rome.

It was, and perhaps still is a common practice amongst both Copts and Mohammedans to wear about their persons a bone taken from the body of a polytheist or of a Jew. This was supposed to afford immunity from all sorts of fevers. A bone taken from any ancient Egyptian mummy was often worn.

The remedy for sterility was for the woman who wished to become a mother to step over the corpse of an executed criminal, or into a basin of water which had been used to wash his corpse, or to tread on a human skull, or walk between the tombs of a cemetery, or step over some antique resemblance of a cat or other relic of old Egypt.

The cure for a stye in the eye was to eat bread obtained from seven different women, each called Fatma, the name of the Prophet's daughter.

Headache was cured by driving a nail into one of the gates of Cairo, called the Bab-el-Zueilah. For toothache, it was considered necessary to extract the tooth, and deposit it in a crevice of the same gate. The latter part of this operation was supposed to prevent other teeth from aching.

One of the most frequent antidotes for poison was to write certain texts of the Koran on slips of paper, which were then thrown into a dish of water. The water was stirred and the solution drunk.

Innumerable remedies existed, and probably still exist, to counteract the dreaded effects of the Evil Eye, belief in which has existed from time immemorial in Egypt.[1] The most efficacious is to steal a piece of the dress of the supposed envier, burn it, and fumigate the envied person with it. Another common practice is to heat some alum, and to prick one of the water bubbles, saying at the same time: "I prick the eye of the envier." Cornelian and charcoal are worn on the forehead by Moslem children for the same purpose. Parents also sometimes keep a monkey or a gazelle in the house in order to avert the Evil Eye.

I may here mention a curious case of superstition which came under my personal notice. Some years ago, my eldest son was dangerously ill with typhoid fever at Cairo. A short time before his illness, he had been given a black dog, which used to live in the house. The pattering of the dog's footsteps on the floor of the room disturbed the patient's rest. The dog was, therefore, sent out of the house. I afterwards learnt that my Egyptian servants looked on the dog as an "Afrit" (devil), that they considered the case hopeless so long as the dog remained in the house, but entertained no doubt of ultimate recovery directly the animal was removed. In this particular instance, as my son recovered, their belief in the power of "Afrits" must have been strengthened.

In the instances so far given, the fantastic remedies applied in cases of sickness have their origin in superstition. Instances of prescribed cures based on complete ignorance of medical science and dissociated from any religious belief, however perverted, might readily be added. Thus, Dr. Sandwith tells of a Coptic bone-setter of celebrity, who was called in to attend a woman with a dislocated hip. He "gave instructions that the woman's hip should be tightly bound to a half-starved cow, and that the cow should then be fed until the rapid swelling of the animal had caused the reduction of the dislocation."[1]

---

[1] "Abundant testimony exists in the oldest monuments in the world that among the ancient Egyptians belief in and dread of the Evil Eye were ever present; their efforts to avert or to baffle it, both as regarded the living and the dead, who they knew would live again, were perhaps the most constant and elaborate of any, of which we can now decipher the traces."—Elworthy's *The Evil Eye*, p. 6.

The credit of having first brought true knowledge to bear on all this mass of ignorance and credulity belongs to an eminent Frenchman. Dr. Clot Bey, who was the father of Egyptian medical reform, was summoned to Egypt by Mehemet Ali. Under his auspices, a School of Medicine and Pharmacy, as well as a Maternity Hospital for the instruction of midwives, were created; a sanitary service for the interior of the country was also organised. A European doctor and apothecary, who were aided by Egyptian medical men and women, were appointed to every province in Lower Egypt. Under the intelligent stimulus thus afforded, considerable progress was made in the direction of medical and sanitary reform. All the superior officers possessed a European diploma.

At a later period, Egyptians, possessing only certificates issued locally, were nominated to high posts. European control was relaxed. The reforms, which had begun to blossom, withered under the misrule of Ismail. The shadow of approaching bankruptcy fell upon the land. Useful expenditure was everywhere cut down with an unsparing hand in order to compensate for the financial vagaries of a spendthrift Khedive. "At the end of 1878," Dr. Sandwith says, "all sanitary, quarantine, and hospital buildings had fallen into ruin for want of funds, and the provincial hospitals naturally suffered to a greater degree than others."

---

[1] The state of things described above was but little, if at all, worse than that which existed in England and Scotland so late as the eighteenth century. During the first half of that century "medicines in common use contained brains of hares and foxes, snails burnt in the shell, powder of human skull and Egyptian mummy, burnt hoofs of horses, calcined cockle-shells, pigeon's blood, ashes of little frogs—like to the diabolical contents of the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*" (Graham's *Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 51). *The Poor Man's Physician*, written by the "famous John Moncrieff of Tippermalloch," prescribes the following as a cure for whitlow: "Stop the finger with a cat's ear, and it will be whole in half an hour." In 1744, Mrs. Delany sent to her nephew, as an infallible cure for ague, "a spider put into a goosequill, well sealed and secured, and hung about the child's neck."—*Mrs. Delany's Memoirs*, p. 138.

By the time the British occupied the country in 1882, three-fourths of the good effects of Clot Bey's reforms had been obliterated. The School of Medicine still existed, but the instruction afforded to the students was very defective. The greater number of the medical officers serving under the Egyptian Government were ignorant and incompetent. They were also underpaid, with the natural result that they used the numerous opportunities afforded to them in the exercise of their official functions to increase their incomes by illicit means.[1] The state of the hospitals was deplorable. Nothing could be worse than the general administration of the Medical Department. Sir Guyer Hunter, who was sent to Egypt in 1883 to report on the cholera epidemic which then prevailed, wrote:

"The hospitals, as a rule, are in a more or less tumble-down, dirty condition, impregnated with foul odours, and containing beds filthy in the extreme; they are, in fact, noisome places, utterly unfit for the reception of human beings. . . . The medical administration is simply deplorable. I took the opportunity of examining the hospital registers. Here, as in everything else which met my observation under this administration, matters were as bad as bad could be."

---

[1] "A dishonest man may occasionally threaten to cause some sweeping reform to be carried out in a village, unless a sum of money is immediately collected for him by the headman, or money may be obtained from a private individual by threatening to perform an autopsy on the dead body of his relative, on the plea that there is some suspicion of foul play. To the uneducated Musulman, who believes that the dead can feel and should be treated with a respect similar to the living, this idea is naturally repugnant."—Sandwith, *Medical Matters in Egypt*, p. 7.

As to the Lunatic Asylum in Cairo, an English doctor, who visited this institution in 1877, wrote:

"The whole place is so utterly beyond the ken of civilisation that it remains as hideous a blot on the earth's surface as is to be found even in the Dark Continent."

The veterinary art is of special importance in Egypt owing to the ravages which have at times been made by the cattle disease. The veterinary surgeons, however, Dr. Sandwith, speaking of the early days of the occupation, said, "may be fairly passed over with the remark that they are more ignorant, and not more honest, than their medical brethren."

It would be beyond the scope of this work, and moreover, would be of little interest to the general reader, were an attempt made to give the details connected with the work of reform accomplished as regards the subject now under discussion. The results may, however, be briefly summarised.

Modern medicine and surgery are essentially European sciences. The superiority of Western over Eastern therapeutic methods; the cosmopolitan character of the work performed by the physician and the surgeon; the dissociation which exists, or which at all events should exist between the art of healing the sick and political, racial, or religious rivalry; and the manifest benefits which the Egyptian people, whether as doctors or patients, are capable of receiving from European guidance and tuition—

are all so clear that it might well have been thought that, in this instance at all events, the beneficent co-operation of the Englishman would not only have been accepted without demur, but would even have been invited and welcomed. Such, however, was unfortunately not the case. The best, and, indeed, the only method of providing for the medical wants of Egypt without flooding the country with European doctors, was to take in hand the work of medical education. It was from the first evident that a few qualified Englishmen at the School of Medicine would, through the influence of teaching, be able in a few years to spread the light of Western science throughout the country. A cruel fate, however, ordained that, by a fortuitous and most unfortunate combination of circumstances, which are not worth relating in detail, the School of Medicine was for some while a hotbed of ultra-Mohammedan and anti-European feeling. This obstacle, though sufficient to retard, was powerless to arrest the progress of medical instruction. With characteristic Anglo-Saxon energy, the Englishman set to work to make the Egyptian "un médecin malgré lui." His perseverance was rewarded. The School of Medicine at Cairo was eventually, in spite of much opposition, put on a sound footing. A capable staff of Egyptian doctors, some of whom have European diplomas, is being gradually created.

The hospitals, the number of which has been largely increased, are now clean, properly equipped with beds, bedding, and clothing, and supplied with medicines, appliances, and instruments. The prejudice, which formerly existed, against being treated in a hospital, is gradually disappearing. About 31,000 in-patients and 118,000 out-patients were treated in the Government Hospitals during 1906. The number both of in- and out-patients is steadily increasing every year. A staff of trained English nurses has been attached to the principal hospital in Cairo, to the great benefit of the Egyptian nurses and pupils, whom they train and educate by precept and example. Dispensaries, where the poor can obtain gratuitous treatment, have been opened in several towns.

Vaccination has been carried out on a large scale amongst the Egyptian population, though the Capitulations hinder its extension amongst Europeans.[1]

A vigorous campaign, initiated in the first instance by the munificence of Sir Ernest Cassel, has been commenced against ophthalmia, which was formerly the curse of Egypt.[2]

A Foundling Hospital has been erected by private subscription in memory of a European lady who had endeared herself to the whole population.

The Lunatic Asylum at Cairo, which has been placed in charge of an English specialist, is now in perfect order. Another large Asylum is in course of construction.

Considerable progress has also been made in the Veterinary Department since 1886, when it was put under the control of an English veterinary surgeon. The butchers' shops, dairies, slaughter-houses, cattle-sheds, etc., have been regularly inspected and controlled, their owners being induced or compelled to maintain them in a satisfactory sanitary condition. Several outbreaks of pleuro-pneumonia and other epizootic diseases have been stamped out. A Veterinary College, as also an Anti-Rabic Institute, have been established.

---

[1] "Half the cases of small-pox notified occurred among Europeans, a proportion which is extremely heavy when we consider the preponderance of the natives in Cairo, and was, no doubt, due to non-vaccination, many of the lower-class Europeans neglecting to have their children vaccinated. Though vaccination is compulsory on all persons residing in Egypt, the law is evaded by some of the Europeans from the fact that the births among this class of the population are not notified at the Public Health Office, but at the respective Consulates, and the Consuls in many cases do not send in the notifications to this Department, and the Government are unable to enforce the law on the parents."—*Report of the Public Health Department for* 1905.

[2] Not very long ago Mrs. Ross, the daughter of Lady Duff Gordon, visited Egypt. Forty years previously, she had had peculiar facilities for observing the condition of the people. I asked her what was the change which struck her most. I was pleased, and also surprised at her reply. She said, "The marked decrease in ophthalmia."

On the whole, although of course much remains to be done, it may be said that, in so far as medical instruction and organisation, veterinary administration, and the proper maintenance of hospitals, dispensaries, and lunatic asylums are concerned, an amount of progress has been realised which is as great as could reasonably be expected. The very capable Englishmen who have devoted their energies to the work of this Department, and who, like all other British officials in Egypt, have had great obstacles to encounter, have at all events succeeded in introducing the first commonplace elements of Western order and civilisation into the country.

Sanitary reform has, of course, progressed less rapidly than improvements in the medical service. In the former case, the conservative instincts of the people, and their indifference to sanitation, constitute an almost insuperable barrier to rapid progress. At the same time, much has already been done. The water-supply of the principal towns has been taken in hand. The Mosque latrines are no longer drained into the Nile or the canals, and in most of the towns the Mosques themselves have been put in a satisfactory sanitary condition. Authority has been obtained to remove cemeteries pronounced to be a danger to public health. A commencement has been made in filling up the highly insanitary pools which are to be found in close proximity to most Egyptian villages. As funds become available, it cannot be doubted that sanitary reform will, year by year, occupy a more prominent place in the Government programme.

Before leaving this branch of my subject, some brief allusion must be made to the eminent services rendered by the Sanitary Department in arresting the progress of the various epidemics which have visited Egypt of late years. In the cholera epidemic of 1883, 58,369 deaths from this disease were registered, and it is certain that the real number was far in excess of this figure. In 1896, another severe epidemic of cholera visited the country. The number of deaths was limited to 18,105. It cannot be doubted that the reduced mortality was, in a great measure, due to the improved efficiency of the Sanitary Department, under the auspices of Sir John Rogers and Sir Horace Pinching. This Department also dealt successfully with the cholera epidemic of 1902, and, moreover, gained well-deserved laurels in its treatment of the epidemic of plague in 1898 and subsequent years.

Some interesting statistics have been drawn up, showing the relative number of deaths in Alexandria from the plague epidemic which lasted from 1834 to 1843, as compared with those for the years 1899 to 1905. The number of deaths in the former period of ten years was 12,380. The number in the latter period of seven years was 647. The statistics of the earlier period are probably very imperfect. At the same time, they are sufficient to show the effect produced by the more stringent measures recently taken to check the disease, as compared with the results obtained by the methods adopted during the earlier of the two epidemics.

# CHAPTER LVIII

## JUSTICE

**Sir Edward Malet's opinion—The Mixed and Consular Courts—The Kadis' Courts—The Native Tribunals—Justice prior to 1883—The French system taken as a model—The judicial machinery—Reforms instituted by Sir John Scott and Sir Malcolm McIlwraith—Opposition to these reforms—The personnel of the Courts—Result of the reforms.**

When Sir Edward Malet left Egypt in 1883, he declared that the first requirement of the Egyptian population was justice. In the present chapter, an endeavour will be made to state very briefly how far this requirement has been met.

It has been already explained[1] that the Mixed Tribunals deal with all civil cases, in which Europeans are concerned, and the Consular Courts with all criminal cases in which Europeans are the accused parties. The latter Courts apply their national laws. Of these institutions, no more need be said. Up to the present time (1907) the jurisdiction of the Consular Courts remains unchanged. The law administered by the Mixed Tribunals has merely undergone some minor modifications. In each of these cases, the reasons for this long immunity from change have, broadly speaking, been twofold. The first is that neither the Mixed nor the Consular Courts stood nearly so much in need of reform as the Egyptian portions of the judicial system. The second is that, hedged behind the almost impenetrable barrier of internationalism, both of these jurisdictions have so far been able to defy the efforts of the reformer.

---

[1] See Chapter XLII.

Neither need much be said about the Kadis' Courts. These Courts deal with all questions affecting the personal status of Moslems. If they are ever to be improved, the movement in favour of reform must come from within. It must be initiated by the Egyptians themselves. Any serious attempt to impose reforms by pressure from without would be extremely impolitic, and, moreover, would probably result in failure. The British reformer, therefore, being partly convinced of the uselessness of attack and partly impelled by political necessity, turned aside from Mohammedan law-reform. Although he made some faltering steps in the direction of improving the Kadis' Courts, his energies were mainly applied in other directions, where better results were to be obtained.

There remain the Native Tribunals instituted in 1883. These deal with all civil cases in which both parties are Ottoman subjects, and with all criminal cases in which an Ottoman subject is the accused party. It can scarcely be said that these Courts took the place of any existing institutions. They were new creations. The judges were the instruments who gave expression to a phase of thought which had been hitherto unfamiliar to the Egyptian mind. Prior to 1883, a system of punishment existed, or it would be perhaps more correct to say that a method was in force by which occasionally somebody was punished for an offence which as often as not he had never committed, whilst not unfrequently others were punished without any offence at law having been committed at all. Moreover, the existence of some rude code of Civil Law was so far recognised as to enable the worst illegalities to be hallowed by legal sanction. For instance, when Ismail Pasha confiscated the vineyard of some Naboth among his subjects, the transfer was always effected in accordance with strictly legal forms. But any system of justice, properly so called, was unknown in the country. The divorce between law, such as it was, and justice was absolute. It has been already explained[1] how, in 1883, the Department of Justice was, to some extent, placed under British management; how, during the storm and stress of the years 1884-85, when the Anglo-Egyptian bark was being tossed hither and thither by the waves of Soudanese troubles, bankruptcy, and international rivalry, this Department, as well as that of the Interior, were confided to Egyptian hands; how the experiment, which was then tried, resulted in complete failure; and how eventually, with the nomination of Sir John Scott to the post of Judicial Adviser, an era of real reform commenced.

It is true that, prior to 1883, no system of justice existed in Egypt. It is not, however, on that account to be supposed that the English were free to introduce into the country any system which they preferred. Such was far from being the case. French law and procedure had already taken root in Egypt. The codes administered by the Mixed Tribunals were French. All the young Egyptians who had received any legal training had been educated in France. It was, therefore, inevitable that the new Tribunals should be based on a French rather than on an English model. The necessity was regrettable, for a simple code of law and procedure, somewhat similar to that which was subsequently introduced into the Soudan, would—more especially in criminal matters—have probably been more suited to the requirements of the country than that which was actually adopted.[1]

---

[1] *Vide ante*, pp. 288-90.

Proposals have frequently been made to sweep away the system of criminal justice inaugurated shortly after the British occupation took place, and to substitute something else in its place. Apart from other and very valid objections to the adoption of this course, it is to be observed that those who have urged this radical treatment of the question have not, perhaps, sufficiently realised that, although the system is, indeed, by no means perfect, the main difficulties which have to be encountered in introducing any improvements are inherent in the situation, and cannot be removed by any mere change of system. They arise from the character of the people, from the impossibility of creating rapidly a competent judiciary calculated to inspire confidence and respect, and, generally, from the circumstances which are the necessary accompaniment of a transitionary period from arbitrary government to a reign of law. It was, therefore, decided to make no radical changes, but to remedy the defects which existed by gradually introducing such minor reforms as experience showed were calculated to adapt the system more fully to the requirements of the country.

It is unnecessary that I should describe in detail the nature of the changes which, from time to time, have been carried out under the auspices of successive Egyptian Ministers of Justice aided by Sir John Scott, and his successor, Sir Malcolm McIlwraith. The most important of these have been the establishment of a Committee of Surveillance who, without possessing any power to upset or revise judgments already delivered, watch over the proceedings of the Courts of First Instance; the partial decentralisation, first of Civil, and subsequently of Criminal justice; the revision of the Criminal Codes with the object of freeing them from useless formalism; and the establishment of Assize Courts whose judgments, save on points of law, are final.

---

[1] The danger of making too faithful a copy of European judicial institutions is fully recognised by the best French authorities on colonial affairs. In an interesting article, written by M. de Lavigne Sainte-Suzanne, and entitled "La Justice Indigène aux Colonies," which appeared in the *Revue Diplomatique*, the following passage occurs :—

"C'est surtout dans l'organisation de la justice indigène que retrouve son application cette formule qui devrait servir de base à tout le programme du droit colonial : pas d'assimilation. S'il est absurde de transporter chez des peuples encore primitifs tous les rouages administratifs en usage dans la vieille Europe, il devient dangereux et inique d'imposer aux indigènes notre législation et notre organisation judiciaire."

These reforms followed what may be considered the normal course of all administrative change in Egypt. When any new measure is proposed, a certain amount of opposition is sure to be encountered. This opposition will sometimes be based on the conservative tendencies of the more old-fashioned class of Egyptians, who look askance at any one who aspires to *moliri res novas*; or, it may be based on the mental inelasticity of the Egyptian reformer, who, albeit somewhat prone to radical change, finds it difficult to get out of the special groove into which, by the accident of education and association, his intellectual forces have been directed. When the reform is eventually accomplished, it is discovered that the fears of the opposition were groundless, and that the measure, so far from having done harm, has done much good. This experience will in no degree act as a preventive to a repetition of similar tactics on some future occasion; but it is a point which the European reformer should bear in mind that, provided always that his proposals be reasonable, they will generally, after a certain amount of murmuring, be accepted. All Easterns carry fatalism into the practical affairs of life; they readily bow before an accomplished fact. In the particular cases described above, the somewhat fictitious opposition, which was at one time excited against Sir John Scott's and Sir Malcolm McIlwraith's proposals, died an unusually speedy death. The benefits derived from the reforms were, in fact, too manifest to admit of doubt. Experience soon pricked the theoretical bubbles of which the opponents of practical reforms in Egypt are at times prodigal.[1]

So far, the main features of the judicial system which were introduced have been described. The chief difficulty in this, as in so many other cases, has, however, been not to devise a system, but to find men capable of working it. Sir John Scott, writing in the early part of 1894, said:

"'Tant valent les juges, tant valent les lois,' is a principle which had been overlooked before 1890; and judges had been named in Appeal, as well as in First Instance, who were far from possessing the necessary qualifications."

In point of fact, when the Tribunals were first instituted in 1883, few Egyptians were to be found who were capable of exercising judicial functions. Moreover, amongst those few, the best men were frequently not selected. The appointments were jobbed. Gradually, the least capable men have been weeded out. It cannot be doubted that the standard of efficiency in the law-courts is steadily improving. I should add that the personnel of the

---

[1] Perhaps the most striking instance of the collapse of opposition was in the case of the Assize Courts. Few measures have been more violently or more universally condemned. Yet, very shortly after the change of system had been effected, one of the most competent of the Egyptian judicial officials was able to write: "Nothing shows more clearly the efficiency and excellency of the new system than the absence of all criticisms upon the results obtained by its adoption, especially when it is remembered that, when the project was under consideration, it gave rise to much difference of opinion, and to fears as to the consequence which would be entailed from the point of view of justice." The establishment of these Courts has, *inter alia*, rendered justice much more expeditious than formerly.

Judicial Department is almost wholly Egyptian. Out of a total staff of 1600, only 36 are Europeans.

Have the changes, whose main features have thus been briefly described, given to the population of Egypt a sound system of justice, on the necessity of which Sir Edward Malet insisted in 1883?

In a sense, this question may unhesitatingly be answered in the affirmative. The system, which I do not doubt Sir Edward Malet wished to advocate, was one under which law-courts should be placed in a position to protect the most humble individual of the community against the caprices of his ruler and of the Government agents, of whose malpractices Sir Edward Malet had been a scandalised witness. Law-courts possessing both the power and the will to attain this object have been created. Not only are the judges independent of the Government, but they are in the highest degree sensitive of any words or deeds calculated to call their independence in question. Justice is no longer bought and sold. It may be dilatory, and, as in other countries, it may occasionally err. It may perhaps be that, where racial or religious feelings are evoked, some—probably unconscious—bias may be discerned. But no more grave accusation than this can be brought against the Egyptian law courts. So early as March 9, 1893, I was able to write to Lord Rosebery: "It can now be said that justice in Egypt is administered on fixed principles and, with occasional exceptions, the decisions are just." The fact that no more than ten years after the British occupation commenced a statement of this sort could be recorded reflects great credit, not only on the Ministers and their Judicial Advisers, who have guided the work of reform in this Department, but also on the European and Egyptian judges and other officials who have co-operated with them.

The Anglo-Saxon race have broad shoulders. They may well pardon a little pedantry, as well as the Anglophobia which the Egyptian judges have at times displayed, and which is to a great extent the result of ignorance and misguidance, if, in dealing with the litigious affairs of their own countrymen, their "decisions are just."

The protection of the weak against the strong is, however, not the sole function of justice. It should also be able to protect society against evil-doers. That this protection has, of late years, been inadequate in Egypt, can scarcely be doubted. It is easy to indicate the main reason for this state of things. On the one hand, civilisation insists on the cardinal principle that no man is to be punished for any offence unless he is clearly proved to have committed it. On the other hand, the peculiar conditions of Egyptian society render it often a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain evidence of guilt sufficient to warrant a conviction. In the last report which I wrote from Egypt before tendering the resignation of my appointment, I made the following remarks, to which I have nothing to add :—

"I have no hesitation in stating that the increase of crime, to which I have frequently alluded in former Reports, is the most unsatisfactory feature in the whole Egyptian situation. The Government are frequently being pressed to examine into the causes which have led to the increase, and to look to the removal of those causes, rather than to the punishment of the offenders, as the true remedy for the existing state of affairs. As a matter of general principle, I entirely agree that when, in any country, it is found that the number of crimes is increasing, it is most necessary to inquire into the cause, but the possibility of applying any remedy other than that of punishment must obviously depend upon the nature of the cause when once it has been ascertained. It generally happens that increasing poverty is the parent of increasing crime. No one with the least knowledge of the country will think that the recent increase of crime in Egypt is due to poverty. There must be some other cause, and, in my opinion, it is not far to seek. It is, I think, to be found in the fact that the law does not inspire sufficient terror to evildoers. Only 43·5 per cent of the crimes committed last year (1906) were punished. In the remaining 56·5 per cent, it was found impossible to discover the criminals, or, if they were discovered, to prove their guilt. I was talking a short time ago to a distinguished Frenchman who was well acquainted with the affairs of Algeria. He explained to me that certain districts lying in the Algerian Hinterland, where military law used to be applied, had recently been brought under the ordinary criminal codes. The comment of one of the principal Algerian Sheikhs on this change was curious. 'Then,' he said, 'there will be no justice. Witnesses will be required.' I commend this remark to those who are in a hurry to apply Western methods in their entirety to a backward Eastern population. The Sheikh was not in the least struck with the fact that, in the absence of witnesses, an innocent man might possibly be condemned. What struck him was that, as no one could be condemned without witnesses, guilty people would generally escape punishment. This is precisely what is happening in Egypt. I have said over and over again, and I now repeat, that I strongly deprecate any resort to heroic remedies in dealing with this question. There must be no radical change of system. But there should be no delusion as to the time which will be required, or the difficulties which have still to be encountered, before a well-established reign of law can take the place of the arbitrary system under which, until recently, the Egyptians were governed. In the meanwhile, let us by all means do everything that is possible, not merely to improve the Police and the judicial systems, but also, by indirect means, such as education and the establishment of adult reformatories, to diminish crime and check criminal tendencies. But, simultaneously with all this, I trust that criminals will receive adequate punishment when their guilt has been brought home to them. I deprecate the false sentiment which expends all its sympathy on the criminal and reserves none for his victims. I at times observe symptoms which lead me to believe that this sentiment prevails to a somewhat excessive degree in Egypt."[1]

---

[1] *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1907, p. 85.

# CHAPTER LIX

## EDUCATION

Educational policy—Obstacles to progress—Want of money—The Pashas—Intellectual awakening of Egypt—The Mosque schools—Primary and Secondary education—Progress made in forming the characters of the Egyptians—Female education.

THE subjects which have so far been treated fall within the domain of material or administrative progress. What, however, has been done in the direction of moral and intellectual progress? Have the English made any endeavour to educate the Egyptians? "Egypt," a high authority on Eastern affairs has said, "has always been the servant of nations."[1] Have the English, as some critics of the baser sort aver, viewed this condition of political degradation with ill-disguised favour?[2] Have they discouraged the acquisition of knowledge, with a view to keeping the Egyptians in a position of servitude to the British nation? Or has a more noble policy been adopted? Have the English, casting aside all feelings based on a mistaken and ignoble egotism, endeavoured to educate the Egyptians and to lead them, so far as was possible, along the path which may possibly end in self-government?

---

[1] Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 168.

[2] It was not only with surprise, but also with a feeling of keen disappointment, that I read in a work written by M. de Guerville a letter from Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, in which that eminent man appeared to give the weight of his name to insinuations of this sort. He must have known perfectly well that they were wholly devoid of foundation. I had hoped for better things of him.

In the present chapter an attempt will be made to answer these questions. They are of vital importance, not only to the Egyptians themselves, but also to all Europe, and more especially to England. The reason why they are so important is that if ever the Egyptians learn to govern themselves — if, in other words, the full execution of the policy of "Egypt for the Egyptians" becomes feasible—the Egyptian question will, it may be hoped and presumed, finally cease to be a cause of trouble to Europe, and the British nation will be relieved of an onerous responsibility.

Many years ago, Lord Macaulay asked a pertinent question in connection with the system under which India should be governed. "Are we," he said, "to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive?" His reply was an indignant negative. "Governments, like men," he said, "may buy existence too dear. *Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas* is a despicable policy both in individuals and in States."[1]

The English in Egypt have acted on the principle advocated by Macaulay. They may repel, with equal truth and scorn, the insinuation that, for political reasons, they have fostered Egyptian ignorance and subserviency. If a race of Egyptians capable of governing the country without foreign aid has not as yet been formed, the fault does not lie with the English. It must be sought elsewhere, neither need any impartial person go far afield to find where it lies. It lies mainly in the fact that two decades are but a short time in the life of a nation. Material progress may, under certain conditions, be rapid. Moral and intellectual progress must of necessity always be a plant of slow growth. It takes more time to form the mind of a statesman, or even to train a competent administrator, than it does to dig a canal or to construct a railway. When the unpromising nature of the raw material on which the English had to work is considered, when it is remembered that for centuries prior to the British occupation the Egyptians were governed under a system eminently calculated to paralyse their intellectual and warp their moral faculties, and when it is further borne in mind that the circumstances under which reform was undertaken were of an exceptionally difficult and complicated nature, it may well be a matter for surprise, not that so little, but that so much progress in the direction of a real Egyptian autonomy has been made in so short a time.

---

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, July 10, 1833.

Consider what is generally meant by Europeans when they talk of Egyptian self-government. If they meant that the Egyptians should be allowed to govern themselves according to their own rude lights, the task of educating them in the art of self-government would not merely have been easy; there would have been no necessity that it should have been undertaken. The indigenous art of self-government had already been acquired in 1882, and we know with what results; no European instruction would have been able to improve on its recognised canons. What Europeans mean when they talk of Egyptian self-government is that the Egyptians, far from being allowed to follow the bent of their own unreformed propensities, should only be permitted to govern themselves after the fashion in which Europeans think they ought to be governed.

I am not one of those who think that "any State can be saved, and any political problem solved, by enlightened administration."[1] At the same time, looking to the magnitude of all the interests involved in Egypt, there is a limit to the degree of maladministration which can be tolerated in order to ensure all the advantages of self-government. It cannot be doubted that that limit would be passed, if complete autonomy were suddenly bestowed on the Egyptians.

---

[1] This was the view held by Peregrino Rossi, who was subsequently assassinated, during the early struggles for Italian unity.—Trevelyan's *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*, p. 74.

To suppose that the characters and intellects of even a small number of Egyptians can in a few years be trained to such an extent as to admit of their undertaking the sole direction of one of the most complicated political and administrative machines which the world has ever known, and of guiding such a machine along the path of even fairly good government, is a sheer absurdity. I must apologise to those of my readers who have any real acquaintance with Egyptian affairs for indulging in platitudes of this description. If I do so, it is because it would appear that the race of those who dream dreams of real autonomy in the very near future is not yet extinct.

The main reason why it is hopeless to expect that any immediate and important political fruit can be gathered from the tree of educational progress in Egypt has been already indicated. It is now necessary to explain the further obstacles which have stood in the way of rapid progress in the work of education. They were mainly twofold.

The first and principal obstacle has been want of money. In 1877 and 1878—that is to say, during the worst periods of the financial chaos created by Ismail Pasha — the Government expenditure on education only amounted to the paltry sum of £E.29,000 a year. Under the Dual Control, the grant was raised to about £E.70,000 a year. During the early days of the British occupation, that is to say, whilst the issue of the "Race against Bankruptcy" was still doubtful, the utmost economy had to be practised; and even when the race was won, it was felt that, however necessary it might be to provide schools for Egyptian children, it was still more necessary to limit the excessive demands which the tax-gatherer had heretofore made on their parents. Fiscal relief, therefore, took precedence of everything. It was not until 1890 that the Financial Department found itself in a position to increase the sum of money spent by the State on education to £E.81,000. Since then, it has been steadily increasing in amount.[1] It would long since have been largely increased had not internationalism, by depriving the Egyptian Government of the free use of their own resources, barred the way.

Want of money, therefore, was the first obstacle in the way of rapid progress. The idiosyncrasies of Pashadom constituted the second. It was not that the Pashas did not wish to advance the cause of education in Egypt. Far from it. Many of them yearned — and very naturally and rightly yearned—for educational progress. They recognised that the acquisition of knowledge was the sole instrument by the use of which Egypt might perhaps eventually be freed from foreign control. But they were themselves too ignorant of educational administration to be able to initiate the only measures which would have satisfied their very legitimate yearnings. The execution of their own policy was perpetually leading them to conclusions which their prejudices forced them to reject. The natural result ensued. The policy of Pashadom was a mass of inconsistencies. Moreover, the evil effects of those inconsistencies were enhanced by the fact that, at every turn of the wheel of nepotism, some fresh individual was, during the early years of the occupation, appointed to direct the affairs of the Department of Public Instruction. "The frequent changes in educational policy during past years," I wrote in 1892, "have proved a great obstacle to educational progress in Egypt. During the past twenty-nine years, the Minister (or Director-General) of Public Instruction has been changed twenty-nine times. At each change, the schools have for a time been more or less completely upset and demoralised, as it has been the prevailing tendency of the Minister to reverse the administrative methods of his predecessor."

---

[1] £E.305,000 was expended on education in 1906. The provision made in the estimates for 1907 amounted to £E.374,000, and this amount has been increased to £E.450,450 in the estimates for 1908. These figures represent only "ordinary" expenditure. They do not include the special credits for the construction and maintenance of school buildings.

At one moment, recourse has been had to the usual remedy of the Egyptian reformer. A servile copy was made of some foreign institution. "On s'était contenté," says Yacoub Artin Pasha, who is by far the highest Egyptian authority on educational matters in Egypt, "de copier les programmes des écoles de France, et sans se donner la peine de chercher à les modifier selon les besoins du pays et de notre culture future."[1] At the next moment, the undisciplined mind of the old-fashioned Pasha, with characteristic want of moderation, would spring at a bound to the opposite extreme of anti-European sentiment. He might own that European knowledge was good, but he refused to accept the inevitable conclusion that, at all events until a capable staff of Egyptian teachers had been trained, Europeans alone could impart it. Sciences cannot be learnt save in those languages which possess a scientific literature and vocabulary. Yet the Pasha, under the influence of prejudices which his powers of reasoning were too feeble to stem, declared that a science which could not be taught in Arabic, should not be taught at all. There was one thing which the Pasha could do, and which, in fact, he did. He could multiply schools and scholars without any regard to the qualifications of the professors, to the value of the instruction imparted, or to the schoolroom accommodation which was available. He could thus practise his favourite art of self-deception. He could give statistical proof that he was moving rapidly forward, whilst all the time he was in reality stationary, if, indeed, his movements were not retrograde. On the whole, it may be said that one of the chief obstacles to the adoption of an enlightened educational policy in Egypt in the early days of the occupation was the presence of a few leading Pashas who, in theory at all events, favoured educational progress. There can be no doubt that, if the English had from the first had a free hand in this matter, greater progress would have been made than has actually been the case.

---

[1] *Considérations sur l'Instruction Publique en Égypte*, p. 116.

From one point of view, however, the English took in hand the work of educating the Egyptians at a propitious moment. Almost simultaneously with the occurrence of the British occupation, the country underwent an intellectual awakening. The people of Egypt had, in fact, slumbered since the days of Mehemet Ali. One of the most singular traits in that remarkable man's character was that, although he was himself uneducated, although he could never write, and did not learn to read till he was forty-seven years old, and then imperfectly, he placed a high value on European knowledge.[1] He established schools in the towns and large villages. Mehemet Ali was, however, in some respects, in advance of his time. "Knowledge was then so unpopular that mothers blinded their children to keep them from school."[1] More than half a century later, the population generally appreciated the value of education almost as little as they did in the days of Mehemet Ali. Writing in 1894, Yacoub Artin Pasha said:—

---

[1] See M. de Lesseps' remarks to Mr. Senior, *Conversations, etc.*, p. 129.

"Il n'y a pas une dizaine d'années que le public en général, non seulement ne s'intéressait pas à l'instruction de ses enfants, main encore y était opposé, quoique dans une moindre mesure qu'il y a soixante ans."

It is not to be supposed that the Egyptians were suddenly inspired with a thirst for knowledge for its own sake, or that they awoke to a keen sense of shame at their own ignorance. The new spirit was, at all events in the first instance, rather to be attributed to the fact that, in a country where a large section of the upper and middle classes of society depends on Government employment, parents suddenly realised that, unless their children were sent to school, they would probably not be able to gain their livelihood. Contact with the West, the partial Europeanisation of the administrative services, and the emulation inspired by the presence of European, Levantine, and Syrian competitors, produced, therefore, at least one beneficial result.

But whatever be the cause, there can be no doubt of the fact. The best test of whether the Egyptians really desire to be educated is to ascertain whether they are prepared to pay for education. On this point, the evidence is conclusive. In the early days of the British occupation, nearly all the pupils who attended the Government schools were taught gratuitously. Before many years had passed, by far the greater proportion paid for their instruction.[1]

---

[1] See M. de Lesseps' remarks to Mr. Senior, *Conversations, etc.*, p. 130.

In 1889, I visited many remote villages of Upper Egypt in which the face of a European is rarely seen. No request was more frequently made to me than that I should urge the Government to establish a school in the village. "De différents côtés," Yacoub Artin Pasha wrote at about this period, "on demande des écoles, et là où il en existe déjà on demande quelquefois leur dévéloppement, sans se rendre bien compte, il est vrai, de ce que l'on demande." The Egyptians have, in fact, made one great step forward in the race for a national existence. They have learnt that they are ignorant. They wish to be taught.

It is now necessary to explain what measures were adopted for teaching them.

"The chief aim and object of education in Islam," Mr. Hughes says, "is to obtain a knowledge of the religion of Mohammed, and anything beyond this is considered superfluous and even dangerous."[2] Under these circumstances, it was clear to the British reformer that the education imparted at the famous University of El-Azhar could not be utilised to raise the general standard of education in Egypt. He, therefore, left that institution alone.

The El-Azhar University stands at the summit of the purely Moslem educational system of Egypt. The village schools (Kuttabs), which are attached to most of the Mosques in the country, stand at the base of that system. As regards the quality of the instruction afforded in these schools, Mr. Hughes makes the following remarks:—

---

[1] The policy which has of late years been pursued in connection with the matter to which allusion is here made, has been vigorously attacked. The grounds on which, as it appears to me, it may be successfully defended are stated at some length in *Egypt*, No. 1 of 1906, pp. 82-89.

In this work, I have merely endeavoured to give a general sketch of the progress which has been made in the various branches of the administration. It would lead me to too great length were I to attempt to answer all the criticisms which have, from time to time, been made on the working of the various Departments. This remark applies with special force to the work of the Department of Public Instruction. It has formed the subject of a great deal of very unjust animadversion.

[2] Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 106.

"The child who attends these seminaries is first taught his alphabet, which he learns from a small board on which the letters are written by the teacher. He then becomes acquainted with the numerical value of each letter. After this, he learns to write down the ninety-nine names of God, and other simple words taken from the Koran. When he has mastered the spelling of words, he proceeds to learn the first chapter of the Koran, then the last chapter, and gradually reads through the whole Koran in Arabic, which he usually does without understanding a word of it. Having finished the Koran, which is considered an incumbent religious duty, the pupil is instructed in the elements of grammar, and perhaps a few simple rules of arithmetic. . . . The ordinary schoolmaster is generally a man of little learning."

It would be an exaggeration to say that these Mosque schools are absolutely useless. Through their instrumentality, a certain number of children are taught to read and write. Organised as they were at the time the British occupation commenced, they were, however, as nearly useless as any educational establishments could be. Want of funds at first stood in the way of any attempt to reform them, but about 1897 the matter was taken in hand. A reasonable curriculum, based on the teaching of the three R's, was adopted. The teaching of any foreign language was rigorously excluded. Since 1898, the number of village schools under Government supervision has increased year by year.

In 1906, 4554 village schools were either directly under Government control or under departmental inspection for grants-in-aid. They gave instruction to 165,000 pupils, of whom nearly 13,000 were girls.

It is on every ground of the highest importance that a sustained effort should be made to place elementary education in Egypt on a sound footing. The schoolmaster is abroad in the land. We may wish him well, but no one who is interested in the future of the country should blind himself to the fact that his successful advance carries with it certain unavoidable disadvantages. The process of manufacturing demagogues has, in fact, not only already begun, but may be said to be well advanced. The intellectual phase through which India is now passing stands before the world as a warning that it is unwise, even if it be not dangerous, to create too wide a gap between the state of education of the higher and of the lower classes in an Oriental country governed under the inspiration of a Western democracy. High education cannot and ought not to be checked or discouraged. The policy advocated by Macaulay is sound. Moreover, it is the only policy worthy of a civilised nation. But if it is to be carried out without danger to the State, the ignorance of the masses should be tempered *pari passu* with the intellectual advance of those who are destined to be their leaders. It is neither wise nor just that the people should be left intellectually defenceless in the presence of the hare-brained and empirical projects which the political charlatan, himself but half-educated, will not fail to pour into their credulous ears. In this early part of the twentieth century, there is no possible general remedy against the demagogue except that which consists in educating those who are his natural prey to such an extent that they may, at all events, have some chance of discerning the imposture which but too often lurks beneath his perfervid eloquence and political quackery.

Considerations of space render it necessary that I should abstain—albeit somewhat reluctantly—from giving a description of the progress made of late years in Egypt in the direction of Primary and Secondary education. For the same reason, I do not deal with the very important question of Technical education.[1] I must, therefore, confine myself to stating the bald fact that, in 1906, 505 educational establishments, exclusive of village schools, existed in the country. These gave employment to 4341 teachers, and instruction to about 92,000 pupils, of whom about 20,000 were girls. Under the enlightened administration of the present Minister, Saad Pasha Zagloul, and of his Adviser, Mr. Dunlop, education of every description is making rapid strides in advance.

It cannot be doubted that the quality of the instruction afforded at the Government schools has of late years been greatly improved. The skilful methods and direct personal influence of the new European teachers, who have been introduced into the Department of Education, have been steadily raising the general level of the schools, in spite of the numerous obstacles encountered. Whilst there has been an increasingly strict supervision of the teaching of Arabic and the Koran, the study of European languages has been placed on a new basis. Previously, pupils were allowed to waste their time and addle their brains by attempting the study of an impossible number of languages. It was a great step in advance when the time-honoured methods adopted in Egypt of loading the memory without exercising the mind were abandoned. English and French are now no longer merely treated as additional subjects of linguistic study. Either of these languages is used as the medium of instruction in certain subjects, such as history, science, etc. In course of time, as the number of highly trained Egyptian teachers increases, instruction will, without doubt, be given in Arabic to a much greater extent than heretofore.[1]

---

[1] Very full explanations have been given on all these subjects in my successive Annual Reports.

The following remarks made by Mr. Lecky (*Democracy and Liberty*, vol. ii. p. 6) apply, with great force, to the Egyptian educational system: "The great mistake in the education of the poor has in general been that it has been too largely and too ambitiously literary. Primary education should . . . teach the poor to write well and to count well; but, for the rest, it should be much more technical and industrial than literary, and should be more concerned with the observation of facts than with any form of speculative reasoning or opinions. There is much evidence to support the conclusion that the kinds of popular education which have proved morally, as well as intellectually, the most beneficial have been those in which a very moderate amount of purely mental instruction has been combined with physical or industrial training."

In a very interesting article published in the *Edinburgh Review* for October 1907, and entitled "Signs of the Times in India," the disastrous results which have ensued from unduly encouraging a purely literary education in that country to the neglect of scientific and technical training are very clearly indicated.

From the political point of view, the most important educational question is this: Do the educated Egyptians, whose number is now rapidly increasing, possess the qualities and characteristics of potentially self-governing Egyptians? To put the same question in another way, if we speak of education in the broadest sense of the term—that is to say, if we include the formation, not only of the intellect, but also of the character—if, in a word, we comprise all those manifold mental and moral influences which tend towards preparing a boy or girl for a career of usefulness in after life, has any substantial progress been made?

---

[1] That the absence of an adequate staff of trained Egyptian teachers has greatly retarded the progress of education both in Egypt and in the Soudan cannot be doubted. In my Annual Reports, I have frequently alluded to this important subject. The cause has been the same as that which has operated in other Departments of the State, viz. want of money. It is only since the Anglo-French Convention was signed that it has become possible to take seriously in hand the question of rendering the profession of teaching attractive by increasing the salaries of the teachers.

It is obviously impossible to give more than a conjectural answer to this question. Nevertheless, although no positive proof can be adduced that such an opinion is correct, it may be stated with a fair amount of confidence that something has been done towards forming and elevating the characters of the Egyptians. The mere acquisition of the linguistic knowledge, which has enabled a certain number of young Egyptians to study the literature and sciences of Europe, must surely have tended in some degree to engender that accurate habit of thought which is the main characteristic of the Western as opposed to the Eastern mind; whilst it is difficult to believe that constant contact with a number of high-minded Europeans, the example afforded by the elevated standard of thought from which all social and administrative questions have for some years past been approached, the abolition of barbarous punishments, the suppression of forced labour and of torture, the introduction of the new ideas that the rights of property are sacred and that all men are equal in the eyes of the law, the practical abolition of slavery, the discouragement of nepotism, the stigma attached to the worst kinds of vice, and, generally, the fact that the Egyptian social and political atmosphere has for some years been heavily charged with ideas which should act as antidotes against moral degradation—have not in some degree contributed to a partial assimilation of the best European code of morals, in spite of the adverse influence exercised by the immoral or dishonest acts of individual Europeans. Whilst, however, it may reasonably be held that something has been done in the direction of imparting rectitude, virility, and moral equipoise to the Egyptian character, it must be admitted that there is still abundant room for improvement in all these directions. If the moral influences to which the Egyptians are now exposed were withdrawn, or even weakened, a relapse would inevitably ensue.

Let any one who is inclined to take a sanguine view of this subject cast, for a moment, all details aside, and consider the general nature of the problem which presents itself for solution. It is nothing less than this, that the new generation of Egyptians has to be persuaded or forced into imbibing the true spirit of Western civilisation. Although Europe was Christianised first and civilised afterwards, it may perhaps be argued with some degree of plausibility—more especially with the example of Japan before us—that the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy would be involved if it were held that Christianity is the necessary handmaid of European civilisation, and that it is impossible to assimilate the true spirit of that civilisation without adopting the Christian faith. I am insufficiently acquainted with the state of Japan to draw any precise inferences from its recent history. I confine myself, therefore, to arguments derived from facts and subjects which have come under my personal observation, merely observing that both the religion and the social system of Buddhism, and, I believe, of Shintoism, present greater possibilities for the assimilation of exotic secular ideas and forms of government than any which can be claimed for rigid Islamism. Looking then solely to the possibility of reforming those countries which have adopted the faith of Islam, it may be asked whether any one can conceive the existence of true European civilisation on the assumption that the position which women occupy in Europe is abstracted from the general plan? As well can a man blind from his birth be made to conceive the existence of colour. Change the position of women, and one of the main pillars, not only of European civilisation, but at all events of the moral code based on the Christian religion, if not of Christianity itself, falls to the ground. The position of women in Egypt, and in Mohammedan countries generally, is, therefore, a fatal obstacle to the attainment of that elevation of thought and character which should accompany the introduction of European civilisation, if that civilisation is to produce its full measure of beneficial effect.

The obvious remedy would appear to be to educate the women. The remarkable and continuous progress of female education in Egypt within the last few years marks, in fact, very clearly the changes of custom and alteration of ideas which are taking place in the country. When the first efforts to promote female education were made, they met with little sympathy from the population in general. When, many years ago, this matter was first taken in hand, Yacoub Pasha Artin was the only Egyptian who took the least interest in it. More than this, most of the upper-class Egyptians were not merely indifferent to female education; they were absolutely opposed to it. They did not want the women to be educated. Even when girls' schools were, with much difficulty, established, parents, in the first instance, sent their daughters to school reluctantly, and took them away early. In order to encourage the education of girls, it was necessary to admit a large number of free pupils. Most of these came from the poorer classes, and left early, either to be married or because it was thought unbecoming for a girl to attend school after she had passed the earliest years of childhood. All this has now been changed. The reluctance of parents to send their daughters to school has been largely overcome. Free education in the Government Primary Schools has been practically abolished. Demands are frequently made for the establishment of other schools in different parts of the country. The number of private schools for girls has also greatly increased of late years. Further, it is to be observed that the steady output of boys from the Secondary Schools and Higher Colleges has indirectly stimulated the movement in favour of female education. The younger generation are beginning to demand that their wives should possess some qualifications other than those which can be secured in the seclusion of the harem. The interaction of the two branches of education does not stop here, for not only has the growth of education among boys stimulated the desire for instruction to girls, but it has also tended to improve the quality of the education given to girls by prolonging the period of instruction. There appears good reason for supposing that, where education has made progress, the age of marriage has risen, and that, in consequence, the girls are allowed to remain longer than heretofore at school. The prospects of the future are, therefore, distinctly bright in connection with this all-important question.

It, of course, remains an open question whether, when the Egyptian women are educated, they will exercise a healthy and elevating influence over the men. The few Moslem women in Egypt who have, up to the present time, received a European education are, with some very rare exceptions, strictly secluded. It is difficult, therefore, to form any matured opinion as to the results so far obtained.

In Christian Europe, the religious faith of women is generally stronger than that of men. The woman feels and trusts, the man reasons.

The faith of Moslem women, on the other hand, is probably rather less strong than that of Moslem men. Neither need this be any matter for surprise. It is not merely due to the curious impulse which appears almost invariably to drive the East and the West in opposite directions. It is a consequence of the fundamental differences which separate Christianity from Islamism. Although it is an error to suppose that Mohammed's general plan did not involve a future life for women,[1] there can be no doubt that not only did he, by precept and example, relegate women to a position in this world inferior to that of men, but also that the religion which he founded is eminently one conceived by the genius of a man and intended for men. It is, therefore, natural that women should generally be less fervent Moslems than men.

But the Moslem woman is, after all, a woman first and a Moslem afterwards. She would belie her sex if she were not impulsive and inclined, even more than the men, to run to extremes. Although, therefore, the faith of the Moslem woman may perhaps be comparatively weak, her prejudices in respect to all the customs and habits of thought which cluster round Islamism are as strong as, if not stronger than those of the men. A Europeanised Egyptian man usually becomes an Agnostic, and often assimilates many of the least worthy portions of European civilisation. Is there any reason why European education should not produce the same effect on the Europeanised Egyptian woman? I know of none. Indeed, in so far as the Agnosticism is concerned, the woman, on the assumption that her faith is relatively lukewarm, would probably find less difficulty than the man in shaking herself free from the ideas and associations which have surrounded her from her cradle.

---

[1] Surah III., verse 193, and Surah IV., verse 123, of the Koran are conclusive as to Mohammed's teaching on this subject. There can be no doubt that all devout Moslems believe that a future life is reserved for women.

It would obviously be neither safe nor just to draw any general conclusion in connection with this subject from such a limited number of facts and examples as can at present be adduced. If it be once admitted that no good moral results will accrue from female education in Egypt, then, indeed, the reformer may well despair of the cause of Egyptian education generally in the highest sense of the word. The experiment of female education should certainly be continued with vigour. Few people now living can hope to see its results. All that can at present be said is that those results must necessarily be uncertain. But whatever they may eventually be, this much is well-nigh certain—that the European reformer may instruct, he may explain, he may argue, he may devise the most ingenious methods for the moral and material development of the people, he may use his best endeavours to "cut blocks with a razor" and to graft true civilisation on a society which is but just emerging from barbarism, but unless he proves himself able, not only to educate, but to elevate the Egyptian woman, he will never succeed in affording to the Egyptian man, in any thorough degree, the only European education which is worthy of Europe.

What the Egyptian man most requires is the acquisition of all those qualities comprised in the expressive Greek term *αἰδώς*—poorly translated by the English word "self-respect"—and those qualities he can never fully acquire unless, like the Christian European, he becomes monogamous, and thus learns to honour the one woman whom he will also have sworn to love and to cherish until the hand of death parts him from his life-long helpmate.

# CHAPTER LX

## THE SOUDAN

The nature of the Soudan problem—Extent—Population—Results obtained by the Convention of 1899—Executive agency—Finance—Railways—Slavery.

HAVING dealt with the affairs of Egypt, I now propose to give a very brief sketch of the progress of administrative reform in the Soudan.[1]

The problems with which the Government has to deal in the Soudan are not only very different, but also, for the time being, far more simple than those which await solution in Egypt. This latter country has advanced half-way—perhaps many would think more than half-way—on the road towards Western civilisation. It has certainly passed beyond the stage in which the undivided attention of the reformer may be devoted to financial and administrative questions. It has entered on a phase where, unless I am much mistaken, it will year by year become more apparent to all but very superficial observers that the further adaptation and effective assimilation of Western ideas is quite as much a social as a political or administrative question. The really vital issues which the future has reserved for Egypt are not how exotic political institutions can be forced to take root in a soil which is uncongenial to their growth, but how the relations of the sexes can be brought into conformity with modern ideas, how the moral code on which the laws of all civilised countries are based can be made to penetrate into the daily life and manners and customs of the people, and how, without shattering all that is worthy and noble in the Moslem religion, the quasi-religious institutions of the country can be reformed to such an extent as no longer to constitute an insuperable barrier to progress. The Government have sometimes been accused of moving too slowly in Egypt. Does any one who has reflected on the problems which I have briefly indicated above, and who really understands the facts connected with them, consider it possible that they can be solved with rapidity? If so, he must be imbued with an optimism which I am unable to share. Nevertheless, until they are solved, the aspirations of the irresponsible advocate of reforms must always be tinged with a certain degree of unreality, whilst some disappointment must inevitably await the well-intentioned efforts of the responsible man of action.

---

[1] Most of the remarks contained in this chapter have already appeared in my Annual Reports from the year 1899 onwards.

The case of the Soudan is, for the present, wholly different. Even the most advanced portions of that country are still in a very backward condition. For at least a generation to come, no complex question of how Western methods may best be adapted to Eastern minds will probably arise. Political issues are few in number and relatively simple in character. The most important, probably, is how slavery may be completely abolished without causing serious disorder. The rise and fall of some religious impostor may cause some temporary trouble, but the methods for dealing with cases of this sort command the assent alike of Westerns and of educated Orientals. Any danger from religious fanaticism may be mitigated, and perhaps altogether averted, by imposing some reasonable and salutary checks on the freedom of action of missionary bodies. Whatever may be the case in Egypt, there can be no question that what the Soudanese now most of all require is, not national government, but good government. Hence, Sir Reginald Wingate and his very capable staff will be able for the present to devote their entire attention to overcoming the physical difficulties with which they have to deal, and to the introduction of administrative, judicial, and financial measures suitable to the requirements of the primitive society whose interests are entrusted to their care.

The Anglo-Egyptian Soudan covers an area of 950,000 square miles. By far the greater portion of this large territory consists of what the late Lord Salisbury once termed "light sandy soil." The area under cultivation has been steadily increasing of late years. Nevertheless, at the close of 1906, only about 1576 square miles were cultivated. The remainder consisted of desert, swamp, and primæval forest.

The researches made by Sir Reginald Wingate into the past and present population of the Soudan, bring into strong relief the terrible results which ensued from Dervish misrule. It is estimated that, prior to the establishment of the Mahdi's power, the population of the Soudan was about 8½ millions, that of these about 3½ millions were swept away by famine[1] and by disease, notably by small-pox, and that 3¼ millions were killed either in the engagements with the British and Egyptian troops, or in inter-tribal wars. The latter of these two causes accounted for by far the greater portion of the terrible mortality in warfare. Several tribes opposed to the Baggara, who constituted the mainstay of the Dervish power, were well-nigh obliterated. These figures, Sir Reginald Wingate remarked, "seem almost incredible." Nevertheless, he considered them substantially correct. He cited a fact, which came under his personal observation, in support of their correctness. Prior to 1882, the district lying along the banks of the rivers Rahad and Dinder contained upwards of 800 villages. When Sir Reginald Wingate visited this district in 1902, "not a village remained." In an official report prepared on the Berber district towards the close of 1903, it was stated that "villages, which used to produce 500 fighting men, have now only fifty to sixty adults, and in some cases even less." My personal experience is of a nature to confirm this testimony. Shortly after the battle of Omdurman, I visited Metemmeh, a town formerly inhabited by the Jaalin, and situated on the Nile between Berber and Khartoum. It was clear from the buildings which remained that it had formerly contained a large population. At the time of my visit, the inhabitants numbered about 1300, of whom all but 150 were women and children. The men had almost all been killed by the Dervishes.

---

[1] The Dervish soldiery used to rob the inhabitants of their grain reserves, with the result that large numbers died of starvation.

During the last few years, the population has been increasing, but it is probable that it does not now exceed two millions.

The Convention between the British and Egyptian Governments, signed on January 19, 1899, of which a general description has already been given,[1] may be termed the Constitutional Charter of the Soudan. In spite of many anomalies, which were inevitable under all the circumstances of the case, it has conferred an immense boon, both on the people of the Soudan, and on the Egyptians, who, whatever some of them may at present think, are, and must always be deeply interested in the development and good government of that country. The Convention freed the Soudan from the incubus of the Capitulations, and it also obviated the very serious risks which would certainly have been incurred had the adoption of a highly civilised system of government been forced prematurely on the country. I do not suppose that the most ardent advocate, whether of internationalism or of equality of treatment to all creeds and races, would seriously contend that it would have been possible in practice to have worked a system under which Kwat Wad Awaibung, a Shillouk who murdered Ajak Wad Deng because the latter bewitched his son, and caused him to be eaten by a crocodile,[1] would have been tried by a procedure closely resembling that followed at Paris or Berlin, which would have necessitated a civil action brought by some chance European, resident on the upper waters of the Blue Nile, being tried by a body of Judges sitting at Cairo or Alexandria, and which would not have allowed the executive Government to close a liquor shop belonging to a Greek subject at El-Obeid or Mongalla without the presence of a Consular janissary.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* Chapter XXXIII.

I need not describe in detail the executive agency through which effect has been given to the principles embodied in the Convention of 1899. I content myself with saying that the country was, in the first instance, divided into districts, each of which was placed under the control of a military officer. It would, however, be an entire mistake to suppose that the country is under a military government in the ordinary acceptation of that term. The Government, in all its more important features, is essentially civil, although the Governor-General and many of his principal subordinates are military officers. I have frequently rendered testimony to the very valuable services performed by these military officers. I need here only add that the system of education adopted at our Public Schools and Military Colleges is of a nature to turn out a number of young men who are admirable agents in the execution of an Imperial policy. The German, the Frenchman, and others may be, and sometimes are better educated, but any defects on the score of technical knowledge are amply compensated by the governing powers, the willingness to assume responsibility, and the versatility under strange circumstances in which the Anglo-Saxon, trained in the free atmosphere which develops individualism, excels beyond all other nations.

---

[1] A Shillouk named Kwat Wad Awaibung was tried on the charge of murdering Ajak Wad Deng. He pleaded guilty, and made the following statement: "The murdered Ajak Wad Deng owed me a sheep, but would not pay me. He said he would show me his work, and next day my son was eaten by a crocodile, which was, of course, the work of Ajak Wad Deng, and for that reason I killed him. We had had a feud for years, as I was a more successful hippopotamus-hunter than he was, and for that reason he was practising witchery over me and my family." Mr. Bonham Carter, the Legal Secretary of the Soudan Government, in reporting on this case, said: "The accused's belief that the crocodile was acting as agent of the murdered man in killing the accused's son was supported by several other witnesses, and represents a common local belief."

I know of only one disadvantage in employing military officers, and that is, that they are liable to be removed for service elsewhere, more especially in times of national emergency. A Civil service is, therefore, being formed, composed of young men taken from the British Universities. These will gradually take the place of the military officers now employed.

I do not propose to dwell on the progress made in education, the establishment of a judicial system, the preservation of forests, and other administrative matters. Full details on these subjects will be found in my Annual Reports.

I confine my remarks to one or two points of special importance.

Finance is, of course, the keystone of the situation. It was felt from the first that in the Soudan, as in Egypt, a sound financial position was the source from which all other reforms and improvements would have to flow. In the first instance, the situation certainly did not look promising. Those who had had most experience of the country had declared that the Soudan was, and was likely always to remain, a "useless possession." The ravages committed by the Dervishes deepened the sense of its inutility. The population had, as I have already shown, been more than decimated. Flocks and herds had been destroyed. Date-trees, which constitute one of the principal products of the country, had been hewn down in large numbers. Neither life nor property had, for many years, been secure. Under these discouraging auspices, the Soudan revenue for 1898 was estimated at the very modest figure of £E.8000. As a matter of fact, a revenue of £E.35,000 was collected. The expenditure was £E.235,000, thus leaving a deficit of £E.200,000, which had to be made good by the Egyptian Treasury. Eight years later, in 1906, the revenue was £E.804,000, and the net charge on the Egyptian Treasury, exclusive of interest on 3½ millions advanced for capital expenditure, amounted to only about £E.30,000. Inclusive of interest at the rate of 3 per cent on the capital advanced, the charge which had to be borne by the Egyptian Treasury, in 1906, was only £E.130,000.[1] The amount is trifling in comparison to the unquestionable advantages derived by Egypt from the maintenance of a settled government in the Soudan, and from the assured possession of the Nile Valley. I should add that, at the close of the year 1906, a Reserve Fund, amounting to over £E.315,000, had accumulated in the hands of the Soudan Government.

---

[1] From January 1, 1908, the Soudan Government will commence to pay interest on a portion of the capital advanced.

Thus, a very great and rapid improvement has taken place. Moreover, it has been effected without increasing the burden of taxation. The fiscal legislation of the Soudan has been based on the unquestionably sound principle that, in the assessment and collection of the taxes, no innovation, based on Western ideas, should be introduced unless its introduction is altogether unavoidable. The main fault of Oriental fiscal administration has generally been, not so much that the principles on which the taxation is based are unsound, as that the method of applying them has been very defective. On going through the list of the taxes which were collected under the Khalifa's rule, it was found that, although the manner in which they had been levied had been cruel and extortionate to the last degree, they were based on principles which are generally recognised in all Moslem countries. No radical change of system was, therefore, necessary. Broadly speaking, all that was required was that the rates of taxation should in each case be fixed by law; that the taxes should be moderate in amount, and that every care should be taken that no demands were made on the taxpayers save those which the law allowed.

With every desire, however, to avoid the premature introduction of Western methods of administration into the Soudan, it was found practically impossible to devise any proper system for the recovery of taxes without having recourse to some of the principles on which European procedure in such matters is based. The Dervish system consisted in practice in taking as much as the taxpayers could pay. On the other hand, if the land yielded no crop, the tax collector recognised the futility of making any demands on the cultivator.[1] The experience of other Eastern countries has shown that the elasticity thus obtained goes a long way to mitigate the rigour even of the worst fiscal systems.

The European administrator, who has to look to financial equilibrium, naturally desires to introduce a system which will enable him to know, with tolerable accuracy, the amount of revenue on which he can count, not only for a single year, but for a series of years. It is comparatively easy for him to rectify the main defect of the Oriental system. He can substitute a fixed and moderate demand for one which was capricious and generally exorbitant. It is far less easy to obviate the rigidity which is, in some degree, an almost unavoidable accompaniment of the change of system. Notably, it is impossible to dispense altogether with the system of legal expropriation in cases of default, albeit this practice is wholly foreign to the ideas of a backward Oriental population. Something, however, may be done to temper the comparative rigidity of European modes of procedure. Thus, in Egypt, although for many years past expropriation has been legalised, the best part of the Oriental fiscal system has been preserved. It has never been the practice, after imposing a fixed rate on land, to exact the amount of the taxes in good and bad years alike. Liberal concessions have been made to the holders of Sharaki, or unirrigated land. In the Soudan, an attempt has been made to carry this principle somewhat further. It has been laid down that, when a summons is taken out against any man for non-payment of the land tax, the Magistrate, "if he is satisfied that the crop upon the land has failed through no fault of the owner or cultivator, and that the tax cannot be paid without depriving the owner of the means of earning his living as an agriculturist," may adjourn the summons, and report the case to the Governor-General. The latter can then, if he thinks fit, remit the tax.

---

[1] The execution of a system under which the tax is made proportionate to the crop of the year is, of course, in some degree facilitated by the practice, common in all Moslem countries, of taking payment in kind. It has been found necessary to continue this practice in some parts of the Soudan. But it is one which leads to numerous abuses, and it will be desirable to abolish it as soon as possible. It was abolished in Egypt some twenty years ago.

The clothing of the owner and that of his wife and children, the tools of an artisan or the implements of a cultivator, as well as cattle ordinarily employed in agriculture, are exempted from seizure. Further, the process for the recovery of taxes, though it may perhaps be criticised on the ground of being somewhat too elaborate, is manifestly devised with the express object of obviating a resort to expropriation, save in cases of absolute necessity.

I make these remarks because the points here discussed are, in my opinion, of vital importance in the administration of all Eastern countries.

I explained in a former part of this narrative[1] that, at a moment when reckless borrowing had brought Egypt to the verge of ruin, resort was had to what at that time appeared the bold expedient of contracting a fresh loan. The causes which had led to the creation of a situation in the Soudan which, at one time, seemed almost desperate, were different from those which had operated in Egypt, but the remedy adopted was, in principle, the same. The country was practically isolated. It was cut off from the world by a waste of burning and almost waterless desert.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, pp. 462-64.

Manifestly, the first thing to do was to establish the link through whose agency civilisation could gradually be introduced into the country. Scarcely had the sound of the guns of the battle of Omdurman died away, when works were commenced with a view to extending the Nile railway, which then extended only to the Atbara, to Halfaya, opposite Khartoum. It was, however, obvious that some port on the Red Sea coast constituted the natural outlet for the trade of the Soudan. After a full examination of the various alternatives which were available, it was decided to create such a port at a spot, now named Port Soudan, a short distance north of Suakin, and to connect it by railway with the Nile Valley. By January 1906, the railway works were completed. The harbour works are still in course of progress. Thus, the connection between the Soudan and the rest of the world was established.

There is only one further point of special importance to which I need allude in connection with the administration of the Soudan. What has been done to remove the plague-spot of slavery?

The Soudan, of course, no longer constitutes the happy hunting-ground of the Arab slave-hunter. Nevertheless, in spite of every effort, the Slave Trade has not, as yet, been wholly suppressed. Slave raids are still, at times, made, more especially along the Abyssinian frontier. A recent report from Captain McMurdo, the head of the Department for the Suppression of Slavery, contains the following passage: "Speaking generally of the repression of slavery in the Soudan, I venture to state that progress is steadily being made, and that slavery has turned the corner into the high road of abolition, but it is a very long road, and it will take years to get to the end of it. It is not in nature that customs which have existed for centuries can be at once put aside. It is only by bringing to bear a steady pressure on slave-traffickers that abolition will be obtained."

Domestic slavery in the Soudan itself is gradually dying a natural death. On this subject Sir Reginald Wingate wrote some two years ago: "By carefully protecting the interests of those who were previously slaves, and at the same time gradually employing them on remunerative work in other capacities—should they be unwilling to return to their masters as ordinary servants—we shall eventually, with the concurrence and assistance of the inhabitants themselves, gradually transform the status of slavery, and substitute for it a system of paid labour, which will probably be acceptable to master and servant alike."

Thus, the Soudan has been launched on the path which leads to moral and material progress. With reasonable prudence in the management of its affairs, it should continue, year by year, to advance in prosperity.

# CHAPTER LXI

## CONCLUSION

**Summary of this work—Changes since the time of Ismail—The British reformers—Their Egyptian allies—Stability of the reforms**

A SHORT account has thus been given of the reforms which, during the last few years, have been carried out in all the more important branches of the Egyptian and Soudanese State administrations. The description given of those reforms is, indeed, defective. Several important subjects have not been even mentioned. No allusion has been made to the services of many officials who have done excellent work in their special spheres of action.[1] All that has been attempted is to give a general sketch of the progress of Egyptian reform. Even this imperfect sketch may, however, suffice to indicate the main features of the work which has been accomplished. It has been shown how the extravagance and maladministration of Ismail Pasha led to his own downfall, and to the imposition of a qualified European tutelage on the Egyptian Government; how, at the moment when that tutelage was beginning to produce some beneficial results, the country was thrown back into disorder by a military mutiny, the offspring of Ismail's reckless conduct, and by the growth of national aspirations in a form which rendered them incapable of realisation; and how England finally intervened and bade disorder and administrative chaos cease. The readers of this book have been conducted, subject by subject, through the complicated mazes of the Egyptian administrative system. The degree of progress which has been made in the direction of introducing Western civilisation into the country has been described in some detail.

---

[1] I take this opportunity of testifying to the excellent services rendered by the first Secretaries in the Diplomatic Service who acted for me during my temporary absences from Egypt. These were Sir Gerald Portal, whose premature death was a great loss to his country, Sir Arthur Hardinge, Sir Rennell Rodd, and Mr. Findlay. I cannot speak too highly of the invaluable assistance I received from all of these gentlemen.

No one can fully realise the extent of the change which has come over Egypt since the British occupation took place unless he is in some degree familiar with the system under which the country was governed in the days of Ismail Pasha. The contrast between now and then is, indeed, remarkable. A new spirit has been instilled into the population of Egypt. Even the peasant has learnt to scan his rights. Even the Pasha has learnt that others besides himself have rights which must be respected. The courbash may hang on the walls of the Moudirieh, but the Moudir no longer dares to employ it on the backs of the fellaheen. For all practical purposes, it may be said that the hateful corvée system has disappeared. Slavery has virtually ceased to exist. The halcyon days of the adventurer and the usurer are past. Fiscal burthens have been greatly relieved. Everywhere law reigns supreme. Justice is no longer bought and sold. Nature, instead of being spurned and neglected, has been wooed to bestow her gifts on mankind. She has responded to the appeal. The waters of the Nile are now utilised in an intelligent manner. Means of locomotion have been improved and extended. The soldier has acquired some pride in the uniform which he wears. He has fought as he never fought before. The sick man can be nursed in a well-managed hospital. The lunatic is no longer treated like a wild beast. The punishment awarded to the worst criminal is no longer barbarous. Lastly, the schoolmaster is abroad, with results which are as yet uncertain, but which cannot fail to be important.

All these things have been accomplished by the small body of Englishmen who, in various capacities, and with but little direct support or assistance from their Government or its representative, have of late years devoted their energies to the work of Egyptian regeneration. They have had many obstacles to encounter. Internationalism and Pashadom have stood in the path at every turn. But these forces, though they could retard, have failed to arrest the progress of the British reformer. The opposition which he has had to encounter, albeit very embarrassing, merely acted on his system as a healthy tonic. An eminent French literary critic[1] has said that the end of a book should recall its commencement to the mind of the reader. Acting on this principle, I may remind those who have perused these pages that I began this work by stating that, although possibly counterparts to all the abuses which existed, and which to some extent still exist in Egypt, may be found in other countries, the conditions under which the work of Egyptian reform has been undertaken were very peculiar.[2] The special difficulties which have resulted from those conditions have but served to bring out in strong relief one of the main characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race. Other nations might have equally well conceived the reforms which were necessary. It required the singular political adaptability of Englishmen to execute them. A country and a nation have been partially regenerated, in spite of a perverse system of government which might well have seemed to render regeneration almost impossible.

---

[1] Joubert.

[2] *Vide ante,* vol. i. p. 5.

Yet, when it is said that all these things were accomplished by the Englishmen who have served the Egyptian Government, one qualifying remark should in justice be made. It should never be forgotten that many Egyptians have themselves borne a very honourable and useful part in the work of Egyptian regeneration.

Is the skilled labour, the energy, the perseverance, and the patient toil of the English reformers and their Egyptian allies to be thrown away? Is Egypt again to relapse into a semi-barbarous condition? Will posterity declare that this noble effort to elevate a whole nation ended in ultimate failure?

I cannot say what will be the future of Egypt, but I hope and believe that these questions may be answered in the negative.

According to the Eastern adage, the grass never grows again where once the hoof of the Sultan's horse has trod. In the sorely tried country of which this history treats, the hoof of the Turkish horse, whether the rider were Sultan or Khedive, has, indeed, left a deep imprint. Nevertheless, I would fain hope it is not indelible. We are justified in substituting a sanguine in the place of a despondent metaphor. Where once the seeds of true Western civilisation have taken root so deeply as is now the case in Egypt, no retrograde forces, however malignant they may be, will in the end be able to check germination and ultimate growth. The seeds which Ismail Pasha and his predecessors planted produced little but rank weeds. The seeds which have now been planted are those of true civilisation. They will assuredly bring forth fruit in due season. Interested antagonism, ignorance, religious prejudice, and all the forces which cluster round an archaic and corrupt social system, may do their worst. They will not succeed. We have dealt a blow to the forces of reaction in Egypt from which they can never recover, and from which, if England does her duty towards herself, towards the Egyptian people, and towards the civilised world, they will never have a chance of recovering.

# PART VII

# THE FUTURE OF EGYPT

*Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia; nos te,*
*Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam coeloque locamus.*
JUVENAL, *Sat.* x. 365.

*The essential qualities of national greatness are moral, not material.*
LECKY'S *History of England*, vol. i. p. 490.

# CHAPTER LXII

## THE FUTURE OF EGYPT

*Quo Vadis?*—The question of the occupation—Its duration—Egyptian autonomy—The Capitulations—Desirability of training the Egyptians—Importance of finance—Display of sympathy—Conclusion.

It is probable that few Englishmen ever ask themselves seriously the question of *Quo Vadis* in connection with either Indian or Egyptian affairs. Even fewer are tempted to hazard any confident answer to this crucial question.

The practical instincts of our race lead us to deal with whatever affairs we have in hand for the moment, and to discard any attempt to peer too curiously into the remote future. That instinct seems to me to be eminently wise. Whether, however, it be wise or unwise, it certainly exercises so powerful an influence over my mind as to preclude me from endeavouring to forecast what will be the ultimate solution of the Egyptian Question. That solution, moreover, depends, in no small degree, on a factor which is at present both unknown and uncertain, viz., the conduct of the Egyptians themselves. We cannot as yet predict with any degree of assurance the moral, intellectual, and political results likely to be obtained by the transformation which is at present taking place in the Egyptian national character.

Although, however, I will not venture to predict the goal which will eventually be reached, I have no hesitation in expressing an opinion as to that which we should seek to attain. So far as can at present be judged, only two alternative courses are possible. Egypt must eventually either become autonomous, or it must be incorporated into the British Empire. Personally, I am decidedly in favour of moving in the direction of the former of these alternatives.

As a mere academic question, I never have been, neither am I now in favour of the British occupation of Egypt. Looking at the matter from a purely British point of view, I believe that the opinion enunciated by Lord Palmerston in 1857[1] still holds good. More than this, however much I should regret to see the noble work of Egyptian reform checked, I am quite prepared to admit that, if it be in the interests of England to evacuate Egypt, we need not be deterred from doing so by the consideration that it is in the moral and material interests of the Egyptians, however little some few of them may recognise the fact, that we should continue our occupation of the country. It does not appear to me that we need stay in Egypt merely to carry out certain administrative reforms, however desirable they may be, unless those reforms are so essential that their non-execution would contribute to produce serious political or financial complications after the British garrison is withdrawn. All that we have to do is to leave behind us a fairly good, strong, and—above all things—stable Government, which will obviate anarchy and bankruptcy, and will thus prevent the Egyptian Question from again becoming a serious cause of trouble to Europe. We need not inquire too minutely into the acts of such a Government. In order to ensure its stability, it should possess a certain liberty of action, even although it may use that liberty in a manner which would not always be in accordance with our views. But it is essential that, subsequent to the evacuation, the Government should, broadly speaking, act on principles which will be in conformity with the commonplace requirements of Western civilisation. The idea, which at one time found favour with a section of the British public, that Egypt may be left to "stew in its own juice," and that, however great may be the confusion and internal disorder which is created, no necessity for European interference will arise, may at once be set aside as wholly impracticable. It is absurd to suppose that Europe will look on as a passive spectator whilst a retrograde government, based on purely Mohammedan principles and obsolete Oriental ideas, is established in Egypt. The material interests at stake are too important, and the degree of civilisation to which Egypt has attained is too advanced, to admit of such a line of conduct being adopted. Public opinion would force the most sluggish Government into action. If England did not interfere, some other Power would do so. Of the many delusions which at one time existed about Egypt, the greatest of all is the idea that England can shake herself free of the Egyptian Question merely by withdrawing the British garrison, and then declaring to the world that the Egyptians must get on as well as they can by themselves. Lord Granville pursued a policy of this sort in dealing with the affairs of the Soudan, and we know with what result.

---

[1] *Vide ante,* vol. i. p. 92.

It has sometimes been argued that, even if misgovernment were again allowed to reign supreme in Egypt, British interests would be sufficiently secured if all danger of occupation by any other foreign Power were averted. I have already[1] alluded to this aspect of the question, but the point is one of so much importance that I need make no apology for reverting to it.

---

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 383.

It cannot be too clearly understood that neutralisation, under whatsoever conditions, wholly fails to solve the Egyptian Question. The solution of that question would be little, if at all, advanced by merely obtaining guarantees against foreign interference in Egypt. The main difficulty would remain untouched. That difficulty is to decide who is to interfere, on the assumption that some foreign interference is indispensable. If it were thought desirable to prevent competition and rivalry amongst the different offices of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, the object might readily be obtained by forbidding any one of them to aid in extinguishing a fire. The practical result would hardly be considered satisfactory. This, however, is the political system which would be involved in the neutralisation of Egypt. Each member of the European Fire Brigade would be under an obligation not to turn his hose on to an Egyptian conflagration, in order to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of his neighbours. In the meanwhile, the whole edifice of Egyptian civilisation might, and probably would be destroyed, to the infinite detriment not only of the indigenous inhabitants of Egypt, but also of the large number of Europeans who would be ruined if the country were allowed to relapse into anarchy and barbarism. The failure of international action to deal effectively with misgovernment in other parts of the Ottoman dominions serves as a warning in dealing with Egypt.

Is it, however, possible to ensure the existence of a fairly good and stable government in Egypt if the British garrison were withdrawn? That is the main question which has to be answered.

I make no pretension to the gift of political prophecy. I can only state my deliberate opinion, formed after many years of Egyptian experience and in the face of a decided predisposition to favour the policy of evacuation, that at present, and for a long time to come, the results of executing such a policy would be disastrous. Looking to the special intricacies of the Egyptian system of government, to the licence of the local press, to the ignorance and credulity of the mass of the Egyptian population, to the absence of Egyptian statesmen capable of controlling Egyptian society and of guiding the very complicated machine of government, to the diminution of the influence exercised by the British officials and by the diplomatic Representative of England in Egypt which would inevitably result from the evacuation, and to the proved impotence of international action in administrative matters —it appears to me impossible to blind oneself to the fact that, if the British garrison were now withdrawn, a complete upset would most probably ensue. It has to be borne in mind that the Egypt of to-day is very different from the Egypt of the pre-occupation days. A return to personal rule of the Oriental type—and it is in this direction that events would probably trend — would create a revolution. A transfer of power to the present race of Europeanised Egyptians would, to say the least, be an extremely hazardous experiment, so hazardous, indeed, that I am very decidedly of opinion that it would be wholly unjustifiable to attempt it.

It may be that at some future period the Egyptians may be rendered capable of governing themselves without the presence of a foreign army in their midst, and without foreign guidance in civil and military affairs; but that period is far distant. One or more generations must, in my opinion, pass away before the question can be even usefully discussed.

The fact, however, that the occupation must last for a period which cannot now be defined, need not stand in the way of a gradual movement in the direction of autonomy in the sense in which I understand that term as applied to the special case of Egypt. The mere withdrawal of the British garrison would not render Egypt autonomous; on the contrary, it would diminish the prospect of eventual autonomy. It is a contradiction in terms to describe a country as self-governing when all its most important laws are passed, not by any of its inhabitants or by any institutions existing within its own confines, but by the Governments and legislative institutions of sixteen foreign Powers.[1] Such, however, will be the condition of Egypt until the existing régime of the Capitulations is altered. There are, so far as I know, only two methods for effecting a radical alteration of that régime. One is that Egypt should cease to form part of the Ottoman dominions and should be annexed by some foreign Power—a solution which I discard. The other is that means should be devised for establishing a local legislature competent to deal with all local matters. The only real Egyptian autonomy, therefore, which I am able to conceive as either practicable or capable of realisation without serious injury to all the various interests involved, is one which will enable all the dwellers in cosmopolitan Egypt, be they Moslem or Christian, European, Asiatic, or African, to be fused into one self-governing body. That it may take years—possibly generations—to achieve this object is more than probable, but unless it can be achieved, any idea of autonomy, in the true sense of the term, will, in my opinion, have to be abandoned. I stated in the last Report I wrote from Egypt that it is well for every individual and every nation to have an ideal. The ideal of the Moslem patriot is, in my opinion, incapable of realisation. The ideal which I substitute in its place is extremely difficult of attainment, but if the Egyptians of the rising generation will have the wisdom and foresight to work cordially and patiently, in co-operation with European sympathisers, to attain it, it may possibly in time be found capable of realisation.

---

[1] It has also to be borne in mind that unanimity amongst all the foreign Powers is necessary before any law can come into force. Prior to 1867, the German Zollverein was constituted on a somewhat similar basis. Every state of the union had an absolute right of veto on any proposal submitted for its consideration. The system, Mr. Percy Ashley says (*Modern Tariff History*, p. 49), caused "innumerable difficulties and delays." It has, of course, long since ceased to exist.

In the meanwhile, no effort should be spared to render the native Egyptians capable of eventually taking their share in the government of a really autonomous community. Much has already been done in this direction, and it may be confidently anticipated, now that the finances of the country are established on a sound footing and the most pressing demands necessary to ensure material prosperity have been met, that intellectual, and perhaps moral progress will proceed more rapidly during the next quarter of a century than during that which has now terminated. Only, it should never be forgotten that the rapidity of the progress must be made contingent on the means available for ensuring it. "Sound finance," as has been most truly said, "is the foundation of the independence of States."[1] Nothing can compensate the Egyptians for a financial relapse.

Lastly, it should never be forgotten that, in default of community of race, religion, language, and habits of thought, which ordinarily constitute the main bonds of union between the rulers and the ruled, we must endeavour to forge such artificial bonds between the Englishman and the Egyptian as the circumstances of the case render available.

---

[1] Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton*, p. 304.

One of the most important of these bonds must always be the exhibition of reasonable and disciplined sympathy for the Egyptians, not merely by the British Government, but by every individual Englishman engaged in the work of Egyptian administration. This sympathy is a quality, the possession or absence of which is displayed by Englishmen in very various degrees when they are brought in contact with Asiatic or African races. Some go to the extreme of almost brutal antipathy, whilst others display their ill-regulated sympathy in forms which are exaggerated and even mischievous. The Egyptians rightly resent the conduct of the one class, and ridicule that of the other. A middle course, based on accurate information and on a careful study of Egyptian facts and of the Egyptian character, will be found more productive of result than either extreme.

Another bond may, to some extent, be forged by appealing to the person or the pocket. A proper system of justice and of police can protect the former. Material interests can be served by various means, the most effective of which is to keep taxation low. Do not let us, however, imagine that, under any circumstances, we can ever create a feeling of loyalty in the breasts of the Egyptians akin to that felt by a self-governing people for indigenous rulers if, besides being indigenous, they are also beneficent. Neither by the display of sympathy, nor by good government, can we forge bonds which will be other than brittle. Sir Herbert Edwards, writing to Lord Lawrence a few years after the annexation of the Punjab, said: "We are not *liked* anywhere. . . . The people hailed us as deliverers from Sikh maladministration, and we were popular so long as we were plaistering wounds. But the patient is well now, and he finds the doctor a bore. There is no getting over the fact that we are not Mahommedans, that we neither eat, drink, nor intermarry with them."[1]

The present situation in Egypt is very similar to that which existed in the Punjab when Sir Herbert Edwards wrote these lines. The want of gratitude displayed by a nation to its alien benefactors is almost as old as history itself.[2] In whatever degree ingratitude may exist, it would be unjust to blame the Egyptians for following the dictates of human nature. In any case, whatever be the moral harvest we may reap, we must continue to do our duty, and our duty has been indicated to us by the Apostle St. Paul. We must not be "weary in well-doing."

I take leave of a country with which I have been so long associated with the expression of an earnest hope that, in the future, as in the recent past, Egypt will continue to be governed in the interests of the Egyptians, and I commend to my own countrymen the advice which was given to Rome by one of the later Latin poets:[3]

Quod regnas minus est quam quod regnare mereris.

---

[1] *Life of Lord Lawrence*, vol. ii. p. 20.

[2] Gregorovius (*Rome in the Middle Ages*, i. 323) says, speaking of the rule of Theodoric in Italy: "The unhappy King now learnt by experience that not even the wisest and most humane of princes, if he be an alien in race, in customs, and religion, can ever win the hearts of the people."

[3] Rutilius.

# APPENDIX

## KHEDIVES OF EGYPT

| Name. | Born. | Died. | Reigned. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mehemet Ali . . | 1769 | 1849 | 1811–1848 |
| Ibrahim . . . | 1789 | 1848 | 1848 (June-Nov.) |
| Abbas I. . . . | 1813 | 1854 | 1848–1854 |
| Said . . . . | 1822 | 1863 | 1854–1863 |
| Ismail . . . . | 1830 | 1895 | 1863–1879 |
| Tewfik . . . | 1852 | 1892 | 1879–1892 |
| Abbas II. . . . | 1874 | ... | 1892– |

## BRITISH SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

| Name. | From. | To. |
|---|---|---|
| Earl of Derby . . | February 21, 1874 | April 2, 1878 |
| Marquess of Salisbury . | April 2, 1878 . | April 28, 1880 |
| Earl Granville . . | April 28, 1880 . | June 24, 1885 |
| Marquess of Salisbury . | June 24, 1885 . | February 6, 1886 |
| Earl of Rosebery . . | February 6, 1886 . | August 3, 1886 |
| Earl of Iddesleigh . | August 3, 1886 . | January 14, 1887 |
| Marquess of Salisbury . | January 14, 1887 . | August 18, 1892 |
| Earl of Rosebery . . | August 18, 1892 . | March 11, 1894 |
| Earl of Kimberley . | March 11, 1894 . | June 29, 1895 |
| Marquess of Salisbury . | June 29, 1895 . | November 12, 1900 |
| Marquess of Lansdowne | November 12, 1900 | December 11, 1905 |
| Sir Edward Grey . . | December 11, 1905 | ... |

## BRITISH AGENTS AND CONSULS-GENERAL IN EGYPT

| Name. | From. | To. |
|---|---|---|
| Lord Vivian . . | May 10, 1876 . | March 20, 1879 |
| Sir Frank Lascelles . | March 20, 1879 . | October 10, 1879 |
| Sir Edward Malet . | October 10, 1879 . | September 11, 1883 |
| Earl of Cromer . . | September 11, 1883 | May 6, 1907 |
| Sir Eldon Gorst . | May 6, 1907 . . | ... |

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS

## 1875

| | |
|---|---|
| Adhesion of the British Government to the International Law Courts | July 31. |

## 1876

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr. Cave reports on the Finances of Egypt | March 23. |
| The Khedive suspends payment of his Treasury Bills | April 8. |
| Creation of the Commission of the Public Debt | May 2. |
| Issue of the Goschen-Joubert Decree | November 18. |
| Appointment of English and French Controllers (Mr. Romaine and Baron de Malaret) | December 25. |

## 1877

| | |
|---|---|
| An English Commissioner (Sir Evelyn Baring) appointed to the Commission of the Debt | March 2. |
| Signature of the Anti-Slavery Convention between the British and Egyptian Governments | August 4. |

## 1878

| | |
|---|---|
| The Khedive consents to a full inquiry into the financial position of Egypt | April 4. |
| Treaty of Berlin | August 3. |
| First Report of the Commission of Inquiry | August 19. |
| The principle of Ministerial responsibility is recognised. Nubar Pasha charged with the formation of a Ministry. Suspension of the Dual Control. Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières appointed Ministers of Finance and Public Works respectively | August 28. |
| Issue of the Domains Loan of £8,500,000 | October 29 |

## 1879

| | |
|---|---|
| Nubar Pasha and Sir Rivers Wilson assaulted by a crowd of Egyptian officers | February 18. |
| Resignation of Nubar Pasha | February 19. |
| Prince Tewfik appointed Prime Minister | March 10. |
| Dismissal of the European Ministers. Chérif Pasha appointed Prime Minister | April 7. |
| Second Report of the Commission of Inquiry, and resignation of the Commissioners | April 10. |
| The Sultan deposes the Khedive | June 26. |
| Ismail Pasha leaves Egypt | June 30. |
| Chérif Pasha resigns office | August 18. |
| The Dual Control revived. M. de Blignières and Sir Evelyn Baring appointed Controllers | September 4. |
| Riaz Pasha forms a Ministry | September 22. |

## 1880

| | |
|---|---|
| Repeal of the Law of the Moukábala | January 6. |
| Appointment of a Commission of Liquidation | April 2. |
| Sir Auckland Colvin appointed Controller in succession to Sir Evelyn Baring | June 23. |
| Promulgation of the Law of Liquidation | July 17. |

## 1881

| | |
|---|---|
| Mutiny of the Egyptian Army. The Minister of War is dismissed | February 1. |
| The Egyptian Army again mutinies. Fall of the Riaz Ministry. Chérif Pasha becomes Prime Minister | September 9. |
| The Sultan sends two Commissioners to Egypt | October 6. |
| At the instance of the French and British Governments, the Turkish Commissioners leave Egypt | October 19. |
| M. Gambetta assumes office | November 12. |

## 1882

| | |
|---|---|
| The British and French Governments address a Joint Note to the Khedive | January 8. |
| M. Gambetta resigns office. He is succeeded by M. de Freycinet | January 31. |
| Chérif Pasha is dismissed from office. Mahmoud Pasha Sami appointed Prime Minister, with Arábi as Minister of War | February 5. |

| | |
|---|---|
| M. de Blignières resigns his appointment of Controller-General | March. |
| The Arábist Ministers resign, but are reinstated in office | May 23. |
| The British and French Consuls-General demand that Arábi should leave the country. The Arábist Ministry again resigns | May 27. |
| The Arábist Ministry is again reinstated | May 28. |
| The Sultan sends Dervish Pasha as Special Commissioner to Egypt | June 4. |
| A serious riot, attended with loss of life, occurs at Alexandria | June 11. |
| Ragheb Pasha is named Prime Minister, with Arábi as Minister of War | June 17. |
| A Conference, in which Turkey refuses to take part, meets at Constantinople | June 23. |
| Bombardment of Alexandria. The Arábists set fire to the town | July 11. |
| On the motion of M. Clemenceau, the French Chamber passes a vote adverse to the Ministry. M. de Freycinet resigns. M. Duclerc forms a Ministry | August 1. |
| Battle of Tel-el-Kebir | September 13. |
| Cairo occupied by British troops. Arábi is arrested | September 15. |
| The Egyptian Army is disbanded | September 19. |
| Lord Dufferin instructed to go to Egypt | October 29. |
| Arábi condemned to exile | December 3. |
| It is decided not to re-establish the Dual Control | December. |
| Death of M. Gambetta | December 31. |

## 1883

| | |
|---|---|
| Issue of a Circular prohibiting the use of the courbash | January 16. |
| Capitulation of El-Obeid | January 19. |
| Sir Auckland Colvin appointed Financial Adviser | February 4. |
| Promulgation of the Organic Law | May 1. |
| General Hicks's army leaves Duem | September 8. |
| Massacre of Egyptian reinforcements sent from Suakin to Sinkat | October 16. |
| Sir Evelyn Baring appointed Agent and Consul-General | September 11. |
| The British Government agree to the reduction of the garrison and the concentration of British troops at Alexandria | November 1. |
| Sir Edgar Vincent appointed Financial Adviser | November 4. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total defeat of the Egyptian troops sent to the relief of Tokar. Death of Captain Moncrieff, R.N. | November 4. |
| News of the annihilation of General Hicks's army arrives at Cairo | November 18. |
| Sir Evelyn Baring recommends the abandonment of the Soudan | November 19. |
| The British Government agree to the policy of abandoning the Soudan | November 20. |
| The reduction of the British garrison in Egypt countermanded | November 25. |
| Defeat of the Egyptians at Tamanieb | December 2. |
| Fall of Dara. Slatin Bey is taken prisoner. The Province of Darfour falls into the power of the Mahdi | December 23. |

### 1884

| | |
|---|---|
| Chérif Pasha resigns office. Nubar Pasha forms a Ministry | January 8. |
| General Gordon and Colonel Stewart leave Cairo for Khartoum | January 26. |
| Defeat of General Baker's force at El Teb | February 4. |
| Annihilation of the Sinkat garrison | February 8. |
| General Gordon arrives at Berber | February 11. |
| General Gordon arrives at Khartoum | February 18. |
| Sir Gerald Graham defeats the Dervishes at El Teb | February 29. |
| The British Government finally refuse to employ Zobeir Pasha in the Soudan | March 5. |
| Sir Gerald Graham defeats the Dervishes at Tamai | March 13. |
| The British Government refuse to send troops from Suakin to Berber | March 25. |
| Fall of the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province | April 9. |
| All communication with Khartoum is cut off | April 19. |
| Fall of Berber | May 19. |
| First Meeting of the London Conference on Egyptian Finance | June 28. |
| Last Meeting of the London Conference | August 2. |
| The British Government obtain a vote of credit in the House of Commons on account of the Soudan Expedition | August 8. |
| Zeyla occupied by British troops | August 24. |
| Lord Wolseley appointed to the command of the Soudan Expedition | August 26. |
| Murder of Colonel Stewart and Mr. Power | September 18. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Berbera occupied by British troops | September 24. |
| Lord Northbrook reports on the Egyptian situation | November 20. |

## 1885

| | |
|---|---|
| Battle of Abu Klea | January 17. |
| Sir Herbert Stewart is mortally wounded. The Desert Column arrives at Gubat | January 19. |
| Sir Charles Wilson leaves Gubat for Khartoum | January 24. |
| Fall of Khartoum and death of General Gordon | January 26. |
| The Italians occupy Massowah | February 5. |
| Action of Kirbekan. Death of General Earle | February 10. |
| An Egyptian loan of £9,000,000 is guaranteed by the Powers | March 18. |
| Action at Hashin (Eastern Soudan) | March 20. |
| Action of Tofrik (Eastern Soudan) | March 22. |
| Sir Francis Grenfell appointed to command the Egyptian Army | April 19. |
| Evacuation of Harrar | April 26. |
| The British troops retire from Dongola | June 13. |
| Death of the Mahdi | June 22. |
| Capitulation of Sennar | August 19. |
| Capitulation of Kassala | September 30. |
| Convention signed at Constantinople under which Sir Henry Wolff and Moukhtar Pasha proceed as Joint-Commissioners to Egypt | October 24. |
| Battle of Ginniss | December 30. |

## 1886

| | |
|---|---|
| The last of the British troops leave Suakin | January 26. |
| Europeans resident in Egypt are rendered liable to the payment of the House Tax | April 15. |

## 1887

| | |
|---|---|
| Signature of the Wolff Convention | May 28. |
| The Sultan having refused to ratify the Wolff Convention, Sir Henry Wolff leaves Constantinople | July 15. |
| Sir Gerald Portal's mission to Abyssinia | October 12. |

## 1888

| | |
|---|---|
| Issue of a Decree partially abolishing the corvée | April 2. |
| The Suez Canal Convention is signed, but not made operative | April 29. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fall of Nubar Pasha. Riaz Pasha forms a Ministry | June 9. |
| Decree issued constituting a Reserve Fund of £2,000,000 | July 12. |
| Action of Gemaizeh. The Dervishes are driven from the neighbourhood of Suakin | December 20. |

## 1889

| | |
|---|---|
| The power of making by-laws applicable to Europeans is conferred on the Egyptian Government | January 31. |
| Stanley and Emin Pasha meet at Kavalli | February 17. |
| Sir Evelyn Baring reports that the "Race against Bankruptcy" is practically won | February 18. |
| Battle between the Abyssinians and the Dervishes. Death of King John | March 9. |
| Abolition of the Commissions of Brigandage | July. |
| Colonel Wodehouse defeats the Dervishes at Arguin | July 2. |
| Sir Francis Grenfell defeats the Dervishes at Toski. Death of Wad-el-Nejumi | August 3. |
| Sir Elwin Palmer is appointed Financial Adviser in succession to Sir Edgar Vincent | October 23. |

## 1890

| | |
|---|---|
| The repairs to the Barrage are completed | June. |
| Issue of a Decree converting the Preference Stock | June 7. |
| Issue of a Decree converting the Daira Stock | July 5. |

## 1891

| | |
|---|---|
| Appointment of Sir John Scott to be Judicial Adviser | February 15. |
| The Dervishes are defeated, and the Province of Tokar is reoccupied | February 19. |
| Fall of Riaz Pasha. Mustapha Pasha Fehmi forms a Ministry | May 14. |

## 1892

| | |
|---|---|
| Death of the Khedive Tewfik | January 7. |
| Total abolition of the corvée for dredging purposes. Reduction of the Salt Tax. Abolition of the Professional Tax | January 28. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Herbert Kitchener succeeds Sir Francis Grenfell in command of the Egyptian Army | April 9. |

### 1893

| | |
|---|---|
| Dismissal of Mustapha Pasha Fehmi | January 15. |
| Riaz Pasha forms a Ministry | January 18. |
| The Dervishes are defeated by the Italians at Agordat | December 4. |

### 1894

| | |
|---|---|
| Resignation of Riaz Pasha. Nubar Pasha forms a Ministry | April 14. |
| Kassala captured by the Italians | July 17. |
| Appointment of Sir Eldon Gorst to be Adviser to the Department of the Interior | November 2. |

### 1895

| | |
|---|---|
| Nubar Pasha resigns. Mustapha Pasha Fehmi is appointed Prime Minister | November 11. |

### 1896

| | |
|---|---|
| Defeat of the Italian Army at Adua | March 1. |
| The British Government decide to recapture Dongola | March 12. |
| The Caisse de la Dette advances £500,000 to the Egyptian Government | March 26. |
| Battle of Firket | June 7. |
| Dongola occupied | September 23. |
| The Court of Appeal order the Egyptian Government to refund the money advanced by the Caisse de la Dette | December 2. |
| The money is repaid | December 6. |

### 1897

| | |
|---|---|
| Capture of Rejaf by the Belgians | February 7. |
| British mission despatched to Abyssinia | March 10. |
| Abu Hamed captured | August 7. |
| Berber occupied | August 31. |
| Suakin-Berber road opened | October 18. |
| Railway from Wadi Halfa to Abu Hamed completed | October 31. |
| Kassala reoccupied by Egyptian troops | December 26. |

## 1898

| | |
|---|---|
| National Bank created with authority to issue promissory notes | June 25. |
| Signature of the contract for the construction of the Nile Reservoirs | February 20. |
| Battle of the Atbara | April 8. |
| Signature of the contract for selling the Daira property | June 21. |
| The French arrive at Fashoda | July 10. |
| Battle of Omdurman | September 2. |
| Sir Malcolm McIlwraith appointed Judicial Adviser | October 20. |
| Sir Eldon Gorst appointed Financial Adviser, and Mr. Machell appointed Adviser to the Interior | October 20. |
| The French evacuate Fashoda | December 11. |

## 1899

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Cromer's speech at Omdurman | January 4. |
| Death of Nubar Pasha | January 14. |
| Signature of the Soudan Convention | January 19. |
| Destruction of the Khalifa's army. Death of the Khalifa and his leading Emirs. The Soudan declared open to trade | November 24. |
| Lord Kitchener leaves Egypt. Sir Reginald Wingate assumes command of the Egyptian army | December 21. |
| Soudan railway opened to Halfaya | December 30. |

## 1900

| | |
|---|---|
| Post-Office Savings Banks established | January 1. |
| Navigation dues on the Nile abolished | November 29. |

## 1902

| | |
|---|---|
| Creation of an Agricultural Bank | June 1. |
| Commercial Convention signed with France | November 26. |
| Inauguration of the Nile Reservoirs | December 10. |

## 1903

| | |
|---|---|
| Octroi duties abolished | January 1. |

### 1904

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir William Garstin's report on the Nile | March 12. |
| Signature of the Anglo-French Agreement | April 8. |
| Sir Vincent Corbett appointed Financial Adviser | April 12. |
| Issue of a Decree giving effect to the Anglo-French Agreement | November 28. |

### 1905

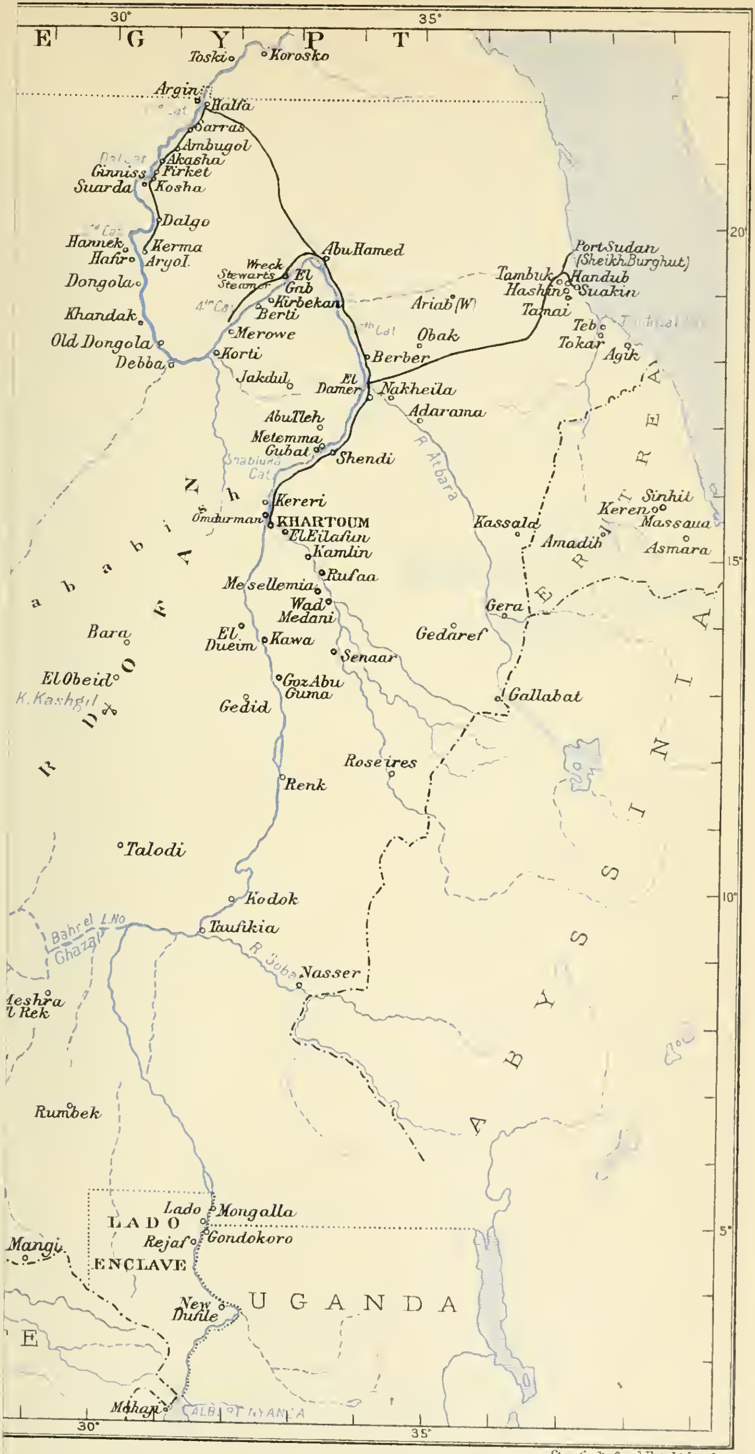
| | |
|---|---|
| Daira debt paid off | October 15. |

### 1906

| | |
|---|---|
| The Salt Monopoly abolished | January 1. |
| The Nile-Red Sea Railway opened | January 27. |
| Mr. Dunlop named Adviser to the Department of Public Instruction | March 24. |
| Sir Nicholas O'Conor addresses a note to the Porte which terminates the "Sinai Peninsula" incident | May 15. |
| Liquidation of the affairs of the Daira | October. |
| Appointment of Saad Pasha Zagloul to be Minister of Education | October 29. |

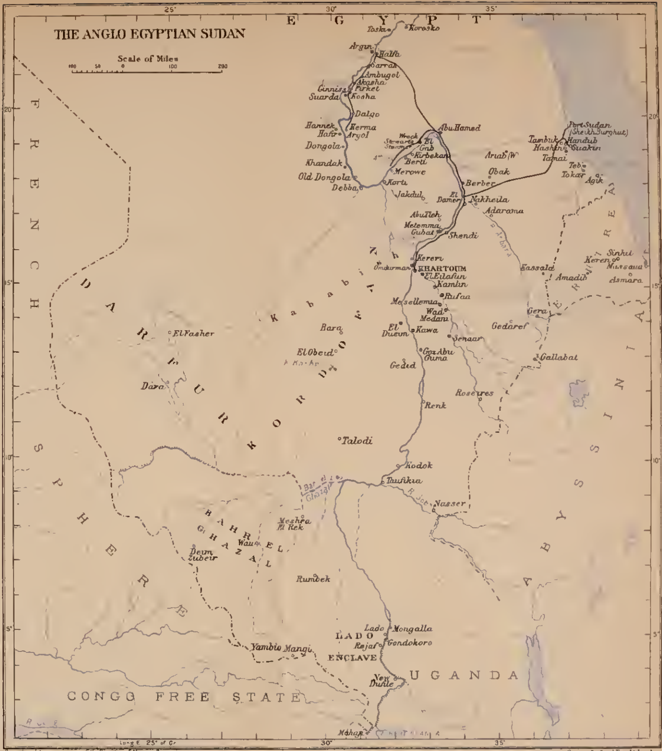
### 1907

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Cromer leaves Egypt. He is succeeded by Sir Eldon Gorst | May 6. |
| Mr. Harvey appointed Financial Adviser | October 9. |



don: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

Stanford's Geog! Estab! London



Reproduced by permission of the Director of Military Operations

Stanford's Geog¹ Estab¹ London

London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

# INDEX

**Abbas I.**, career and character, i. 19-20
Abdul Halim, Prince, i. 136
Abdul-Kader Pasha, i. 356-7
Abdul-Shakour, Emir, i. 453
Abyssinia, King of, treaty with, *re* frontier garrisons, ii. 48
Abyssinian frontier garrisons, ii. 47-9
Accounts Department, Egyptian, Sir Gerald Fitzgerald head of, i. 28
Administration, the—
  Of Interior, ii. 478-513
    difficulties of reform, ii. 478-82
    police reform, ii. 482-90
    prisons, ii. 491-4
    slavery, ii. 495-504
    medical and sanitary, ii. 504-13
  Of Justice, ii. 514-23
    Committee of Surveillance, ii. 518
    Lord Cromer's advice on reform of, ii. 521
  Of Education, ii. 524-42
    lack of money for, ii. 527
    Pashadom and, ii. 528-9
    public desire for schools, ii. 532
    religious instruction, ii. 533
    elementary education, ii. 533
    pupils and teachers, ii. 535
    value of educating the women, ii. 539-42
  Of the Soudan, ii. 543-54
    general system, ii. 543-8
    finance, ii. 549
    taxes, ii. 550-2
    slavery, ii. 553
Airolles, M. Liron d', Secretary of Commission of Inquiry, i. 45
Ala-el-Din Pasha, i. 359
Alcester, Lord (*also see* Sir Beauchamp Seymour), instructions to, i. 294
Alexandria (*see also* Bombardment), Arábi's responsibility for burning, i. 297
Anglo-French Agreement, 1904, ii. 388-93
Annexation, the question of, i. 93
Annexation of Soudan by England, its inadvisability, ii. 113
Anti-Slavery Society and the Soudan, i. 403, 517, ii. 50
Arábi, Ahmed, Pasha—
  mutinies, i. 176-86
  summons Notables, i. 187
  motives of, i. 190-3, 208-9
  and Sultan, i. 194, 198, 272
  Minister for War, i. 243
  the Arábi Ministry, i. 254-78
  resignation and reinstatement of, i. 274-8
  and slaughter of Christians, i. 288
  dismissal of, i. 300
  surrender, trial, and exile, i. 323, 336
  returns to Egypt, i. 337
Armenians, the, ii. 219
Army, British (in Egypt)—
  in 1884, i. 420-1
  Lord Northbrook on withdrawal of, ii. 370
  Wolff Convention on withdrawal of, ii. 376-81
  comment on withdrawal of, ii. 380

Army, the Egyptian—
  recruitments for, i. 50
  mutiny of officers, 1879, i. 74
  petition of Arábi, i. 176-7
  second mutiny of officers, i. 179
  mutiny and French Consul-General, i. 180
  third mutiny, i. 192, 212
  Military Budget, 1882, i. 225
  condition of, in Soudan, 1882, i. 353
  defence of Egypt devolves on, ii. 60
  British Commanders-in-Chief, ii. 474
  summary of facts, ii. 466-77
Assize Courts, ii. 518
Assouan Reservoir, the, ii. 82
Asylums, ii. 511
Atbara, battle of, ii. 98-102
Austria agrees to bombardment of Alexandria, i. 295

Bahr-el-Ghazal under the Mahdi, ii. 41-3
Baird, Sir Alexander, i. 34, 35
Baker, Sir Samuel—
  on the Soudan in 1870, i. 349
  on Gordon, i. 562
Baker, General Valentine, i. 362, ii. 482
  on evacuation of Soudan, i. 376-7
  despatched to Suakin, comment on, i. 400
  instructions to, i. 401
  his defeat, comment, i. 404-9
Bank, Egyptian National—
  proposed creation of, i. 12
  created 1898, ii. 582
Baravelli, M., appointed Italian Commissioner of Debt, i. 12
Baring, Sir Evelyn. *See* Lord Cromer, *also under* British Government's Egyptian Policy
Beaman, Mr., ii. 493
Bedouins, the, ii. 198-9
Beit-el-mal, i. 53
Belgians, King of the, Gordon and Equatorial Provinces, i. 464-5
Berber Expedition, the correspondence *re*, i. 537
Berbera, condition of, ii. 49
  taken by Great Britain, ii. 51
Beresford, Lord Charles, ii. 9
Billot, M., ii. 385
Bismarck, Prince—
  on the claims of Egypt's creditors, i. 33, 132
  epigram, i. 131
  on proposed Conference, i. 284
  on Arábi's power, i. 293
  on international mandate, i. 303
  his hostility to England, 1883-1884, i. 419
Black troops in Egyptian Army, ii. 476
Blignières, M. de—
  French Commissioner of Debt, i. 12
  his character, i. 40
  succeeded by M. de Bughas, i. 103
  Minister of Public Works, i. 63
  dismissed by Ismail, i. 77
  French Controller of Finance, i. 159
  resigns, i. 257
Blum Pasha, i. 103, ii. 291
Blunt, Wilfrid, i. 235
  his Arábist sympathies, i. 255
  employed as intermediary, i. 256
  relations with Mr. Gladstone, i. 279-80
  *Secret History*, i. 285, 287, 297, 323, 335
Bombardment of Alexandria, the—
  negotiations prior to, i. 267-76
  British Fleet arrives, i. 277
  batteries raised at Alexandria, i. 293
  Lord Alcester instructed to stop work on them, i. 294
  French opinion on, i. 294
  Austrian opinion on, i. 295
  Turkish opinion on, i. 296
  the bombardment, i. 296-7
Bondholders, the—
  point of view of the British, i. 41
  point of view of the French, i. 42

Bordeini, Bey, ii. 12, 13
Boutros Pasha Ghali, ii. 211
Bowring, Sir John—
  on the Copts, ii. 205-8-13
  Reports to Lord Palmerston on—
    Europeans in Egypt, i. 17
    Osmanlis in Egypt, i. 175
Brackenbury, General, ii. 24, 60
Bright, John, i. 299
British Government's Egyptian policy—
  Lord Beaconsfield's Government, 1874-1880—
    (Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby)—
      declines to appoint Debt Commissioner, i. 12
      correspondence with Lord Vivian *re* Egyptian Debt and Taxes, i. 32
    (Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury)—
    (British Agent in Egypt, Lord Vivian)—
      instructs Lord Vivian to act with French representative, i. 37
      correspondence with Lord Vivian *re* Nubar Ministry, i. 66, 87-8
    (British Agent, Sir Frank Lascelles)—
      correspondence with Sir Frank Lascelles *re* Prince Tewfik's Ministry, i. 99
      correspondence with Sir F. Lascelles *re* Ismail's engagements, i. 132-41
      correspondence with Sir F. Lascelles *re* Tewfik Pasha's policy, i. 152-7
  Mr. Gladstone's Government, 1880-1885—
    (Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville)—
    (British Agent, Sir Edward Malet)—
      correspondence with Ambassador in Turkey during Arábi's mutiny, i. 196-9
      general policy of, i. 200-5
      correspondence with M. Gambetta and Sir Edward Malet *re* Joint Note, i. 214-29
      correspondence with M. Gambetta and Sir Edward Malet *re* effects of Joint Note, i. 237-46
      correspondence with M. Freycinet and Sir E. Malet during Arábi's ministry, i. 254-77
      correspondence with Sir E. Malet and Lord Dufferin *re* Conference of Powers, i. 283-96
      correspondence with Lord Dufferin *re* Turkish troops for Egypt, i. 310-21
      was a national Government possible at time of Arábi's rebellion, i. 323
      correspondence with Lord Dufferin *re* Arábi's trial, i. 337-45
      correspondence with Sir E. Malet *re* the Soudan, i. 364-7
    (British Agent, Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer))—
      correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* English troops for Soudan, i. 372-3, 376-84
      correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring and military chiefs *re* campaign in Eastern Soudan, i. 399-416
      correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* employment of General Gordon, i. 423-7
      General Gordon appointed to evacuate Soudan, i. 427
      reasons for and against his appointment, i. 427-39
      correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* Gordon's instructions, i. 440-52
      correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* Gor-

don's slavery proclamation, i. 474
    correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* employment of Zobeir Pasha, i. 482-9, 494-529
    reasons for and against Zobeir's appointment, i. 529-34
    correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* Berber Expedition, i. 537-9, 542-5
    reasons for and against Expedition, i. 546-8
    correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* employment of Turkish troops in Soudan, i. 549-52
    Sir Evelyn Baring points out seriousness of Gordon's position, i. 556
    did Gordon endeavour to carry out Government's policy? i. 559-74
  (Mr. Egerton, Temporary Agent)—
    correspondence with Mr. Egerton *re* relief of Berber, i. 574-7
    correspondence *re* relief of Gordon (Lord Wolseley and Lord Hartington), i. 579-80
  (British Agent, Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer))—
    comment on Government's delay, i. 582-92
    correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring on fall of Khartoum, ii. 19
    correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring and Lord Wolseley *re* evacuation of Soudan, ii. 20-9
Lord Salisbury's Governments, 1885-1886, 1886-1892—
  (Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury)—
  (British Agent, Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer))—
    Lord Wolseley informed the Soudan to be evacuated, ii. 29
    comment on policy of evacuation, ii. 29-34, 78
    correspondence with Sir Evelyn Baring *re* advance on Tokar, ii. 75-6
  (British Agent, Lord Cromer)—
    correspondence with, *re* reconquest of Soudan, ii. 82
  analysis of Government's policy, 1882-1883, ii. 349-65
  the Northbrook Mission, ii. 366-71
  the Wolff Convention, ii. 372-81
  neutralisation of the Suez Canal, ii. 382-7
  the Anglo-French Agreement, ii. 388-93
British Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, ii. 573
Broadley, Mr., i. 297
Budgets—
  Budget of Commissioners, 1879, i. 123
  Budget of Khedive, 1879, i. 125
Bughas, M. Bellaigues de—
  Commissioner of Debt in succession to M. de Blignières, i. 103
Buller, Sir Redvers, ii. 18-19
Burnaby, Colonel, death of, ii. 7
Burton, Sir Richard—
  advises occupation of Berbera, ii. 50
  in Harrar, ii. 51
Butler, Sir William, i. 44, 441, 447

Cadastral Survey, i. 55, 104, 115
Camel Corps, Egyptian, ii. 60
Cameron, Mr., on Mehemet Ali's policy, i. 16
Canal, the Suez, measures for protecting, after bombardment of Alexandria, i. 303
Capitulations, use of, i. 326, ii. 428
Carter, Mr. Howard, reports a case of torture, i. 50
Cartwright, Mr., i. 289, 292, 293-4

Cave, Mr. Stephen—
  Financial Report of, 1876, i. 4
  comments on Balance Sheet, 1864-75, i. 11
  comments on law of the Moukábala, i. 30
  comments on Egyptian officials, i. 30-1
Chérif Pasha (*see also under* Egyptian Ministries)—
  summoned before Commissioners, i. 47
  his policy, i. 153, 197-213
  and Arábi's mutiny, i. 187
  on Dual Control, i. 189
  and National party and army, i. 206
  suggests Turkish intervention, i. 244
  his character, ii. 334
Chermside, Sir Herbert, i. 537
Christianity and the Europeanised Egyptian, ii. 230
Christians, attacks on—
  slaughter of, i. 287
  flight of, i. 289
Christians, the Egyptian, ii. 201-227
Chronological Table of Events, ii. 575-83
Churchill, Lord Randolph, i. 339
Civil Service, Egyptian, ii. 298-9
Clemenceau, M., on French interference in Egypt, i. 303, 305
Clot Bey, Dr., ii. 507
Coetlogon, Colonel, i. 375, 544, 572
Coles Pasha on prisons, ii. 494
Colleges, English military, value of training for official life, ii. 548
Colville, Colonel, on Nile Campaign, ii. 4
Colvin, Sir Auckland, head of Cadastral Survey—
  resigns, i. 104
  succeeds Sir Evelyn Baring as Debt Commissioner, i. 127
  succeeds Sir Evelyn Baring as Controller-General, i. 173
  his action during Arábi's mutiny, i. 183-6
  on situation, September 19, 1881, i. 206-7
  his memorandum, December 1881, i. 222-34
  his despatch *re* state of parties in Egypt in December 1881, i. 218-22
  on evacuating Soudan, i. 389
Commission of Debt instituted, i. 12, ii. 305
  objects, working, and alterations of, ii. 304-10
  (*See also* Debt)
Commission of Inquiry into Egyptian Finances, i. 45
  work of, i. 47-63
  limitation of power of, i. 54
  report of, i. 124
  resignation of, i. 124
Commission of Liquidation, 1880, i. 162
Commission (International) to assess claims *re* Alexandrian destruction, i. 339
Commissions of Brigandage, ii. 289
Conference, International, proposed by England and France, i. 283
  meets at Constantinople, i. 291
  Conference suspended, i. 312-13
Consular Courts, ii. 319, 514
Consul-General, the British, duties of, ii. 321-7
Controllers-General of Finances, 1879—
  division of work, i. 161-2
  their power disappears, i. 257
Cookson, Sir Charles, i. 184, 186, 257, 281, 287
Copts, the, ii. 201-13
Corbett, Sir Vincent, ii. 287
Corruption in the public services, ii. 420-5
Corvée, the, i. 50, ii. 405-19
  the need for forced labour, ii. 409
  financial aspect of, ii. 410, 417
  abolition of, ii. 419
Courbash, the, ii. 397-405. *See also* Corvée
Cromer, Lord (Sir Evelyn Baring)—
  (*See also under* British Government's Policy)
  appointed British Commissioner of Debt, i. 15

- inquires into outstanding claims, i. 50-4
- on the necessary reforms, i. 55-62
- on the Nubar ministry, i. 71
- on differences between Lord Vivian and Sir Rivers Wilson, i. 94-5
- on Report of Commission of Inquiry, i. 122-7
- resigns Commissionership of Debt, i. 127
- appointed English Controller-General, i. 159
- work of Controller-General, i. 165-73
- resigns Controllership, i. 173
- returns to Egypt as British representative, i. 345
- his speech at Omdurman, ii. 115
- letter from Sheikh to Sheikh referring to "Baring and his English," ii. 200
- his despatch to Lord Granville on withdrawal of British troops, ii. 362

Customs, control of, ii. 292

Daira Debt, i. 13
Daira Khassa loan, i. 123
Daira Sanieh loan, i. 123, ii. 313-14
Daoud Pasha, i. 182
Darfur during the Mahdi's rebellion, ii. 36-41
Debt, the Egyptian Public—
- in 1863 and 1876, i. 11
- Commission of Debt, i. 12, ii. 304-10
- Lord Goschen and M. Joubert's arrangement of, i. 13
- Sir Evelyn Baring appointed British Commissioner, i. 15
- Funded Debt in 1877-78, i. 33-5
- France and Great Britain act in concert, i. 37
- Commission of Inquiry, i. 45-63
- addition to Funded Debt, i. 54
- interest on Debt, i. 65, 98
- Report of Commission of Inquiry, i. 110-27
- resignation of Commission of Inquiry, i. 124
- Commissioners of Debt sue Government, i. 126
- Sir Evelyn Baring resigns, i. 127
- Sir Auckland Colvin appointed Debt Commissioner, i. 127
- Commission of Liquidation, i. 162
- Law of Liquidation, ii. 305
- changes in functions of Debt Commission, ii. 310
- reduction of debt, ii. 450

Decrees, the, of 1876, i. 12, 13, 14
Derby, Lord, declines to nominate Commissioner, i. 12
- on General Baker's defeat, i. 405

Dervish Pasha, i. 284, 286, 288-89
Dilke, Sir Charles, i. 235
Domains, the, administration of, i. 63, ii. 315
Dongola Expedition, ii. 86
- financial difficulties, ii. 86, 91
- battle at Firket, ii. 90
- Dongola taken, ii. 91

"Droits de voirie," i. 122
Dual Control, the, i. 93, 159, 161, 164-78
- Chérif Pasha on, i. 189
- abolition of, i. 340

Duclerc, M., succeeds M. de Freycinet, i. 305
Dues on stamping mats and on sale of cattle, i. 122
Dufferin, Lord, i. 196, 270, 310
- negotiates military convention with Turkey, i. 312-21
- his mission to Egypt, i. 336
- his report, comment on, i. 341-45
- and the Organic Law, ii. 271-79
- and the courbash, ii. 399
- on slavery, ii. 498

Dunlop, M., ii. 535

Earle, General, tribute to, i. 421, ii. 18, 24
Education. *See* Administration
Education Department, Dunlop, Mr., Adviser to, ii. 293
Egerton, Sir Edwin, i. 432, 558
"Egypt for the Egyptians," fallacies of such a policy, i. 327, ii. 525-6
Egypt, Modern—
- Before British Occupation—
  - extent of, i. 349

    state of, 1876, i. 29
    distribution of power in, i. 175
    condition of, 1882, i. 212, 323-30
    condition in 1884, i. 417-23
  Since occupation—
    extent of, ii. 126
    population, ii. 129
    races in, ii. 127-8
    ruling classes, ii. 131-2
    Islamism, ii. 132-49
    women, position of, ii. 155
    family life, ii. 160
    law, ii. 162
    Moslems, the, ii. 168-99
    village, the, in, ii. 189
    Christians, the, ii. 201-27
    Europeanised Egyptian, ii. 228-44
    Europeans in, ii. 245-59
    Government, the, ii. 260-79
  (*See also under* Army, Administration, Ministries, British Government, Debt, Finance, etc.)
El Obeid, fall of, i. 357
El Teb, battle of, i. 414
Emin Pasha (Governor of Equatoria), ii. 43-6
"Emprunt Rouznameh," the, i. 53
English, the (in Egypt), ii. 252-5
  their friends and foes, ii. 256-9
Equatoria under Emin Pasha, ii. 43-6
  leased to Congo State, ii. 46
Essad Effendi, i. 272, 285, 289
Europeanised Egyptians, the, anglophobia of, ii. 244
Europeans in Egypt—
  summoned by Mehemet Ali, i. 16
  summoned by Ismail, i. 23
  bad name acquired by, i. 23
  character of official, i. 24
  first European Ministers, i. 63
  agitation against Ministers, i. 99
  European intervention, i. 323-30
  census of, ii. 245
  orientalisation of, ii. 247
  and British officials, ii. 255-6
  privileges of, ii. 426-42

Famine of 1878, i. 34
Farrer, Lord, Report on Railways, ii. 311
Fehmi, Ali Bey, i. 176
Fellaheen, the, ii. 192-8
Finances (*see also under* Public Debt)—
  in 1876, i. 27
  Lord Vivian's report on, i. 26
  taxes and collection in 1876, i. 30-2
  taxes and collection in 1878, i. 38
  Commission of Inquiry in Finances, 1878, i. 45
  work of Commission of Inquiry in Finances, i. 47-63
  administration of, before 1878, i. 48
  outstanding claims and deficits, 1878, i. 54
  recommendations of Commission, i. 55
  credit and Oriental view of, i. 58
  revenue returns, 1878, i. 65
  meetings between Sir Rivers Wilson, M. de Blignières, and Sir Evelyn Baring *re* financial position, i. 88
  report of Commission of Inquiry, i. 110-27
  condition of finances on accession of Tewfik Pasha, i. 149
  Khedive's right to contract loans withdrawn, i. 158
  Controllers-General appointed, i. 159
  Commission of Liquidation, i. 162, 172-3
  reform of taxation, 1880, i. 168-171
  Chamber of Notables claims to vote Budget, i. 242
  financial position of Soudan, 1882, i. 354
  conference on financial situation, 1884, i. 558
  Lord Northbrook's proposals, ii. 370
  summary of facts, ii. 443-55
Financial advisers, ii. 287
Financial secretaries, ii. 291
Findlay, Mr., ii. 555

Fitzgerald, Sir Gerald—
  head of Accounts Department, i. 26
  his work and its results, i. 28
  he resigns, i. 103
Flogging. *See* Courbash and Corvée
Forced labour. *See* Corvée
Forster, Mr., on Soudan Policy of Government, i. 410
Freethinker, the Egyptian, ii. 232
French civilisation—
  its attractiveness to Asiatics, ii. 236
  contrasted with English civilisation, ii. 238, 240
French policy (Egyptian)—
  towards bondholders, i. 35-7
  general policy in 1879, i. 91-3, 130-1
  in respect to Arábi's mutiny, i. 180, 196
  in respect to British occupation, i. 204-5
  proposed Anglo-French military control, i. 214
  towards Turkish intervention, i. 155-6, 269, 275
  subsequent to bombardment of Alexandria, i. 302, 305-6
  in respect to Wolff Convention, ii. 372-81
  in 1904, ii. 388
Freycinet, M. de—
  succeeds M. Gambetta, i. 247
  suggests deposing Khedive, i. 260
  suggests sending squadron, i. 266
  suggests conference of Powers, i. 283, 291
Future of Egypt, the, suggestions and warnings, ii. 563-71

Gambetta, M.—
  urges united action by England and France, i. 216, 217
  his policy, i. 216
  prepares Draft Joint Note, i. 223
  negotiations with Lord Granville, i. 237-46
  his influence on the course of Egyptian history, i. 247-53
  on the British occupation, i. 302
Garstin, Sir William, ii. 291
Gatacre, General, ii. 101
Germany's policy in respect to Egypt—
  in 1879, i. 131, 135
  in 1882, i. 292
  in 1904, ii. 391
Ghazi, Moukhtar Pasha, ii. 374
Giers, M. de—
  protests against Wolff Convention, ii. 378
Ginniss, battle at, ii. 30
Gladstone, Mr. (*see also under* British Government)—
  on responsibility for British occupation, i. 160
  denies existence of National Party in Egypt, i. 226
  relations with Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, i. 279-80
  his objection to landing troops after bombardment of Alexandra, i. 298
  on military pacification of Egypt, i. 301
  on Baker Pasha's defeat, i. 405
  on Gordon's Soudan policy, i. 478
  in favour of Zobeir's appointment, i. 531
  on unpopularity of Zobeir's appointment, i. 533
  on difficulties of Egyptian affairs, i. 582
  comment on his responsibility for delay in relieving Gordon, i. 582-92
  responsibility for fall of Khartoum, ii. 17
  his phantom policy, ii. 368-9
Godeaux, M., succeeds Baron des Michels as French Diplomatic Representative, i. 66
Gordon, General (*see also under* British Government)—
  invited to inquire into finances, i. 44
  on value of Soudan, i. 390
  his mission, i. 417-39
  his instructions, i. 390, 443-5
  popularity of, i. 427-31

his appointment a mistake, i. 438-9
in Cairo, i. 440
his policy, i. 442
Governor of Soudan, i. 446, 450-2
and Zobeir Pasha, i. 454-60, 480
leaves for Soudan, i. 460-2
further instructions, i. 464-5
his proclamations, i. 470
on slavery, i. 471-4
at Khartoum, i. 475
his policy, i. 476-7
Précis of correspondence between him, Colonel Stewart, Lord Granville, and Sir Evelyn Baring, i. 480-534
comment on his policy, 1884, i. 560-74
letters from, *via* Dongola, i. 577-8
relief expedition, i. 574-82
comment on delay, i. 581-2
Khedive's telegram to, i. 593
expedition, ii. 5
battles at Abu Klea and Metemmeh, ii. 6-8
Journal, and letters from, ii. 8
death of, ii. 9-17
Gorst, Sir Eldon, ii. 287, 292
Goschen, Lord—
his mission to Egypt, 1876, i. 13-14
he appoints Sir Evelyn Baring Commissioner of Debt, i. 15
Government of Egypt, ii. 260-279
Graham, Major-General Sir Gerald, i. 410, 537, 538
Granville, Lord (*see also under* British Government)—
his lack of initiative, i. 216
and Egyptian Constitutionalism, i. 238
his policy previous to occupation compared with Lord Salisbury's, i. 252-3
personal notes on, i. 392, 420
his optimism, i. 476
Greeks, the, ii. 250-1
Grelle, M. Le, ii. 288-9
Grenfell, Sir Francis—
Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army, ii. 63, 64, 69, 72
Grévy, M.—
on British military preparations, 1882, i. 305

Hake, Mr. Egmont, i. 447
Halim Pasha, i. 196
Harbour works, Alexandria, their cost, i. 51
Hardinge, Sir Arthur, ii. 555
Harrar annexed by Ismail, ii. 52
taken by King Menelek, ii. 53
Hartington, Lord, i. 411, 580-1; ii. 21, 29
Harvey, Mr., ii. 287
Hassan, Prince, i. 78
Herbin, M., ii. 3
Hewett, Admiral, i. 409
Hicks, General—
appointed to Soudan army, 1883, i. 354
complains of his position, i. 361
appointed Commander-in-Chief, i. 361
his optimism, i. 361-3
his army destroyed, i. 368
Colonel Colville on disaster, i. 368
Sir Reginald Wingate on battlefield, i. 369
Hicks-Beach, Sir Michael, ii. 94
Hoskins, Admiral, and French Admiral at Port Said, i. 303
Hospitals, ii. 510-11
Hunter, General, ii. 100-1
Hussein Pasha Khalifa, i. 467

Ibrahim, his career and character, i. 18-19
Indian troops for Suakin, ii. 88
Interior, the, administration of. *See* Administration
International administrations, ii. 304-15
Internationalism, in theory and practice, ii. 301-15
Irrigation (*see also under* Corvee)—
under the Pharaohs and Turks, ii. 457
Lord Milner on improved, ii. 458-9

  - Lord Cromer's report on, ii. 463
- Ismail Pasha—
  - and Public Debt, i. 11
  - and European civilisation, i. 23
  - his extravagance, i. 51-2
  - his power, i. 56-9
  - cedes his estates, i. 61
  - and Nubar-Wilson Ministry, i. 66-7
  - his exclusion from Council discussed, i. 69-70
  - Sir Evelyn Baring's views on exclusion, i. 71-2
  - and officers' mutiny, i. 76-81
  - and constitutionalism, i. 83
  - and foreign interference, i. 83-4
  - excluded from Council, i. 89-90
  - and his Foreign Ministers, i. 99-100
  - his policy, i. 105-9, 143-6
  - advised to abdicate, i. 135-9
  - leaves Egypt, i. 141-2
- Ismail Pasha Eyoub, on the courbash, ii. 399
- Ismail Pasha Sadik, his exactions, i. 26
- Italy—
  - Egyptian policy of, i. 131, ii. 391
  - invited to co-operate with England, i. 308
  - takes Massowah, ii. 57
  - and Abyssinia, ii. 83

- James, Mr. F. L., in Somaliland, ii. 49
- Jebel Kirbekan, battle at, ii. 23
- Joint Note of 1882, i. 214
  - its terms, i. 223
  - local situation when presented, i. 224
  - presented, i. 227
  - summary of views on the, i. 229-35
  - effects of, i. 236-53
- Joubert, M., associated with Lord Goschen, i. 13
- Judicial Advisers, ii. 290
- Judicial system, ii. 316-20
- Justice. *See* Administration

- Kadi, the, legal functions of, ii. 320
  - courts of, ii. 515
- Kalnoky, Count, i. 295
- Kassala, during Mahdi's rebellion, ii. 47
- Khalifa, the (Abdullah-el-Taashi)—
  - succeeds Mahdi, ii. 30
  - battle at Ginniss, effect of, ii. 30
  - letter to Queen Victoria, ii. 62
  - battle of Toski, effect of, ii. 72
  - death of, ii. 105
- Kharadji lands, i. 114, 121
- Khartoum—
  - fall of, ii. 9-17
  - retaken, ii. 105
- Khartoum Campaign, ii. 79-110
  - cost of, ii. 105-6
  - conduct of, ii. 106-9
- Khedives of Egypt, ii. 573
  - the powers of, ii. 269-70
  - (*See also under* Mehemet Ali, Ibrahim, Abbas I., Said, Ismail, Tewfik)
- Kinglake, i. 130, 323, 331
- Kitchener, Major, i. 540, 578
- Kitchener, Sir Herbert—
  - to command Soudan force, ii. 86
  - his qualities for command, ii. 87-9
  - Khartoum Campaign, ii. 89-109
- Kremer, Herr von, Commissioner of Debt, i. 12

- Land, tenure and taxation—
  - held by Khedive, 1876, i. 29
  - Law of the Moukábala, i. 29
  - ceded by Ismail, i. 61-3
  - Ouchouri and Kharadji lands, i. 114-22
- Lands, cultivable, ii. 460
- Lascelles, Sir Frank—
  - British Representative in Egypt, i. 96
  - reports agitation, April 1, 1879, against European Ministry, i. 99
- Lesseps, M. Ferdinand de, President of Commission of Inquiry, i. 45, 323
- Levantine, the, ii. 246-7, 249
- Lighthouses, control of, ii. 292
- Liquidation, Law of, i. 162, ii. 305
- Lloyd, Mr. Clifford, i. 378, 419, ii. 482-8

Lupton, Mr. Frank, ii. 42
Lyall, Sir Alfred, i. 552, ii. 231
Lyons, Lord, i. 199

MacDonald, Major, i. 338
McIlwraith, Sir Malcolm, ii. 290, 518
McMurdo, Captain, ii. 553
McNeill, Sir John, ii. 25
Machell, Mr., ii. 292
Mahdi, the—
  of tradition, i. 351-2
  Mohammed Ahmed proclaims himself, i. 352
  rebellion of, comment on, i. 356
  Hicks's army destroyed by, i. 368
  letter to Gordon, i. 470
  Lord Wolseley on power of, ii. 22
  death of, ii. 30
  succeeded by Khalifa. *See* Khalifa
Mahdiism, comment on, ii. 63-4
Mahmoud Pasha Baroudi, i. 179
Mahmoud Pasha Sami, i. 243, 257
Malaret, Baron de, Controller-General of Expenditure, i. 14
Malet, Sir Edward (*see also under* British Government), i. 164, 181
  on mutinous army, i. 182
  on Khedive's view of mutiny, i. 205-6
  on effect of Joint Note, i. 228-9
  protest to Lord Granville, i. 269
  on slaughter of Christians, i. 288
  his illness, i. 289
  on funds for Soudan army, i. 359
  leaves Egypt, i. 345
Mallet, Sir Louis, i. 15
Marindin, Colonel, Report on Railways, ii. 311
Marriott, General, President of Railway Board, i. 14
Massowah, and Italy, ii. 55-8
Maxwell, Sir Benson, ii. 288
Medical reform, ii. 504
Medicine, School of, ii. 508
Mehemet Ali—
  his career and character, i. 16-18
  if his general principles had been adopted, i. 22
  and education, ii. 530
Menelek, King, ii. 53, 83
Michels, Baron des—
  French diplomatic representative, i. 37
  succeeded by M. Godeaux, i. 66
Milner, Lord, ii. 291-2, 459
Ministers, Egyptian, the, ii. 270-1
Ministries (Egyptian)—
  Nubar Pasha's (Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières, members of), i. 64-81, 384, ii. 581
  Chérif Pasha's, i. 103, 104, 188-90, 300
  Riaz Pasha's, i. 153-4, ii. 343, 581
  "Arábi's," i. 254-78
  Mustapha Pasha Fehmi's, ii. 346, 580, 581
Mixed Courts, i. 33, 419, ii. 316
Moberly Bell, Mr., i. 515
Mohammed Ahmed. *See* Mahdi, the
Mohammed Tahir, i. 467
Moncrieff, Captain, i. 398
Monogamy and family life, ii. 157
Montebello, Count de, protests against Wolff Convention, ii. 378
Morley, Mr. John—
  on Joint Note, i. 227
  on M. Gambetta's policy, i. 250
  on Zobeir's appointment, i. 531
Morocco, Anglo-French agreement, ii. 391
Moslem sects, the, ii. 36, 37
Moslems in Egypt, ii. 168-99
Moudirs, the, i. 48, 258, ii. 484-5
Moukábala, law of the, i. 29, 98, 99, 115, 117, 118, 121
  Mr. Stephen Cave on, i. 30
  repeal of, i. 168
Moukhtar Pasha, ii. 380

Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, i. 265, ii. 346
Musurus Pasha, i. 199, 284, 288

Napoleon III. and partition of North Africa, i. 91
National Movement, Sir Auckland Colvin's Memorandum on, i. 219-21
National Party in Egypt, its existence, i. 226
Native tribunals, ii. 287-9
Nejumi, Wad-el-, ii. 64-71
Nekib-el-Ashraf, i. 99
Nelidoff, M. de, protests against Wolff Convention, ii. 378
Neutralisation of Egypt, comment on, ii. 383
Nile Campaign, ii. 4, 5
Northbrook, Lord—
  on General Gordon, i. 429, 491-2
  on Zobeir Pasha, i. 530
  his mission to Egypt, ii. 366-71
Northcote, Sir Stafford, i. 472
Notables, Chamber of, the, i. 68, 254, 266
  convoked by Ismail, i. 68, 73
  protest of, i. 101
  summoned by Arábi, 187
  at the time of Joint Note, i. 224
  claim to vote the Budget, i. 237, 242
Nubar Pasha—
  his relations with Ibrahim, i. 19
  on Said's policy, i. 21
  his Ministry, 1878-1879, i. 64-81
  his aims and character, i. 70, ii. 335-42
  his unpopularity, i. 72
  assaulted by officers, i. 74
  he resigns, i. 77
  his Ministry, 1884, i. 384

Occupation, the British—
  analysis of causes leading to, i. 252-3
  French opinion, 1882, i. 305-6
  the *Temps* on, i. 306
  Italian opinion, i. 307-9
  Turkish opinion, i. 309
  preferability of, i. 328-30
Octroi dues, i. 122
  partly abolished, i. 168
Officials, British, ii. 280-300
  qualifications of ideal official, ii. 281
  their position, ii. 282
  the need for, ii. 293-8
  their numbers, ii. 298-9
Omar Pasha Lutfi, i. 105
Omdehs, the, ii. 186
Omdurman, battle of, ii. 104
Organic law, the, proposed revision, i. 254, ii. 271-9
Osman Digna—
  the Mahdi's Emir, i. 396
  his campaign in Eastern Soudan, i. 396-9
  his hold on Eastern Soudan, ii. 63
Osman Pasha Rifki, i. 176, 262-3
Ouchouri land-tax, the, i. 68, 99, 114, 121
  increased, i. 168

Paget, Sir Augustus, i. 307
*Pall Mall Gazette*, i. 389, 424, 427, 434, 474, 477, 532
Palmer, Sir Elwin, ii. 287
Palmerston, Lord, i. 10, 83, 84, 92
Pauncefote, Lord, ii. 384
Pickthall, Mr. (*Folk-Lore of the Holy Land*), i. 19
Pinching, Sir Horace, ii. 513
Plague, the, ii. 513
Police—
  Adviser to Minister of Interior appointed, ii. 292
  reforms, ii. 478-82
Poll-tax, i. 122
Polygamy, effects of, ii. 157
Portal, Sir Gerald, ii. 555
Post Office, control of, ii. 292
  statistics of, ii. 313
Power, Mr., i. 358, ii. 3
Prisons—
  Sir Herbert Chermside and Mr. Beaman report on, ii. 492-3
  reform of, ii. 494
Press, the—
  vernacular Press attacks Europeans, i. 211
  retorts of European Press, i. 211

Prime Minister, the Egyptian, his importance, ii. 333
Prime Ministers from 1882, ii. 334
Privilege, European, ii. 426
  its interference with reform, ii. 431
  reforms of, ii. 437
  Lord Cromer's report on, ii. 437
Protectorate, British, petition in favour of, i. 331
Public School, the English, value of training for official life, ii. 548
Public Works Department, ii. 290-1

Queen Victoria—
  and Zobeir's appointment, i. 531
  and fall of Khartoum, ii. 15-16

Ragheb, Pasha, i. 293
Railways, Egyptian—
  falsification of accounts, i. 27
  constructed during Khartoum Campaign, ii. 90
  administration, ii. 310-13
  in Soudan, ii. 553
Reinach, M. Joseph, on M. Gambetta's Egyptian policy, i. 247-53
Riaz, Pasha (*see also under* Ministries, Egyptian)—
  Vice-President Commission of Inquiry, i. 45
  Minister of Interior and Justice, i. 90-1
  denounced as friend of Christians, i. 99
  relations with M. de Blignières, i. 182
  Minister of Interior, i. 300
  his aims and work, ii. 342-6
Ring, Baron de, i. 180, 295
Rodd, Sir Rennell, ii. 555
Rogers, Sir John, ii. 513
Romaine, Mr., Controller-General of Revenue, i. 14
Rosebery, Lord, ii. 413
Rothschild, Messrs.—
  loan, 1878, i. 63, 65
  loan to pay mutinous officers, i. 78
Rouznameh loan, i. 53, 114-16
Rundle, Major, i. 540
Russia's policy in respect to Egypt, i. 131

Saba Pasha, ii. 292
Said Pasha, his career and character, i. 20
St. Hilaire, M. Barthélemy, i. 199
Salisbury, Lord, (*see also under* British Government)—
  criticises Government action, 1881, i. 201
  his policy previous to occupation compared with Lord Granville's, i. 252-3
  on Hicks expedition, i. 367
  moves vote of censure, i. 384
  on soldier's advice on strategic points, ii. 75
  on public indifference, ii. 77
Salt Tax, i. 169
Sanitary Department, ii. 513
Sanitary reform, ii. 504
Sartorius, Colonel and Mrs., i. 397
Schoolmasters, native and foreign, ii. 293
Schools, village, ii. 534
Schweinfurth, Dr., i. 256
Scott, Sir John, ii. 290, 518
Scott-Moncrieff, Sir Colin, ii. 290-1
Scotter, Sir Charles, Report on Railways, ii. 312
Senior, Mr. (*Conversations and Journals in Egypt*), i. 21
Sennar during Mahdi's rebellion, ii. 46
Senoussi movement, the, ii. 39
Seymour, Admiral Sir Beauchamp, arrives at Alexandria, i. 277
Shahin Pasha, i. 105
Sheikh-el-Bekri, i. 99
Sheikh-el-Obeid, i. 518
Sheikh-el-Senoussi, ii. 37
  his relations with Mahdi, ii. 38-39
Sheikh Mohammed Abdu, ii. 179
Sheikh Mohammed Beyram, ii. 181

Sheikh Mohammed-el-Saadat, ii. 177
Sheikhs of villages, the, i. 48, ii. 186
  their views of the English, ii. 191
Sienkiewicz, M., i. 197, 198, 224, 228, 272, 276
Sirdar, the, position of, ii. 283
Slatin Bey, i. 357, ii. 36
Slave Trade, the, ii. 74, 495
Slavery—
  in Soudan, i. 350
  General Gordon on, i. 471-2
  position of the slave, ii. 496-7
  Lord Dufferin on, ii. 498
  disappearing, ii. 499-504
Soudan, the (*see also under* British Government)—
  extent of, January 1883, i. 349
  Sir Samuel Baker on, i. 349
  Colonel Stewart on, i. 350-9
  financial position of, 1882, i. 354
  Grant for army, 1883, i. 355
  the Mahdi, i. 356
  Mr. Power and Lord Dufferin on army, i. 358
  General Hicks in, i. 360-8
  Osman Digna, i. 397-8, 415
  Colonel Baker at Suakin, i. 400-5
  Sir Gerald Graham at Tokar, i. 411-14
  Battle of El-Teb, i. 414
  comment on expedition, i. 414
  the Berber Expedition, i. 536-58
  Battles at Abu Klea and Metemmeh, ii. 6-8
  fall of Khartoum, ii. 9
  evacuation of, ii. 27-29
  fate of Provinces of, ii. 35-59
  comment on evacuation, ii. 29-34
  reconquest of, ii. 79-110
  Atbara, ii. 98-102
  Omdurman, ii. 104
  Khartoum occupied, ii. 105
  political status of new Soudan, ii. 115-19
  size of new Soudan, ii. 545
  administration of. *See* Administration
Stephenson, Sir Frederick, i. 376, 421, 548, 579, ii. 30
Stewart, Sir Herbert, ii. 5-7
Stewart, Colonel—
  on the Soudan, i. 350, 353-4-7-8-60
  with Gordon, i. 427, 433
  contrasted with Gordon, i. 434
  his reports, etc., on route to Khartoum, i. 466-9
  on Gordon's policy in Soudan, i. 482-4
  on value of Soudan, i. 503
  death of, ii. 3
Sturge, Mr., i. 517
Suakin—
  suggested Turkish troops for, i. 381
  Dervish victories near, i. 396-7
  General Graham at, i. 544
  Colonel Holled Smith at, ii. 76
  Indian troops for, ii. 88
Succession, the Egyptian Law of, i. 136, 155
Suez Canal—
  Credit Bill, i. 304
  neutralisation of, ii. 382-7
  Commission to discuss, ii. 385
  Convention put in force, ii. 387
Suleiman Pasha, i. 361
Sultan Pasha, i. 265
Sultan, the, (*see also under* Turkey)—
  his relations with the Khedive, ii. 264-9
Superstitions, ii. 505-6
Syrians, the (Christian), ii. 213-19

Tajourrah annexed by France, ii. 54
Tamai, battle at, i. 415
Taxes. *See* Finances
Tel-el-Kebir, battle of, i. 323
Tewfik Bey, i. 397
Tewfik Pasha—
  President of Council, i. 89-90, 100
  proclaimed Khedive, i. 141
  condition of Egypt at accession, i. 149-51
  and Arábi, i. 176-93, 254-78, 335
  Sir Edward Malet's defence of, i. 261
  and slaughter of Christians, i. 288

  and Gordon, i. 441, 593
  his character, ii. 327-33
Tigrane Pasha, ii. 221-5
*Times*, The, i. 515
Tissot, M., i. 283
Tokar, Sir Evelyn Baring advises occupation of, ii. 74
  Sir Francis Grenfell on, ii. 76
  Colonel Holled Smith takes, ii. 77
Toski, battle of, ii. 64-9
Toulba Pasha, i. 275
Trade, Egyptian, French capital employed in, i. 303
Trescow, M. de, i. 162
Tribunals, International. *See* Mixed Courts
Tribunals, native, ii. 319-20
Tunis, French Protectorate over, i. 332
Turco-Egyptian, the, characteristics of, ii. 169-73
Turkey's Egyptian Policy—
  proposal that Sir Evelyn Baring should be Minister of Finance to Sultan of, i. 59
  *re* Ismail's deposition, i. 129, 140
  subsequent to Ismail's deposition, i. 154-5
  French and British Governments, traditional policy towards, i. 155-6
  during Arábi's mutiny, i. 194
  France and England and, i. 196
  Turkish envoys in Cairo, i. 199
  *re* Joint Note, i. 258-9
  and the Powers, 1882, i. 282-5
  after slaughter of Christians, i. 288
  and Military Convention with Great Britain, i. 308-21
  relations between Khedive and Sultan of, ii. 264-9
  and Wolff Convention, ii. 372-81
  Turkish Commissioner in Egypt, ii. 380

Ulema, the, characteristics of, ii. 173-86
Ulemas, i. 99
Unified Debt, i. 13
University of El-Azhar, ii. 532

Veterinary College, ii. 512
Vincent, Sir Edgar Vincent, i. 422
  value of his work, ii. 287
Vivian, Lord (*see also under* British Governments)—
  British Representative in Egypt, i. 14
  Reports on Finances, 1876, i. 27, 36
  on funded debt, 1877, i. 33-4
  on Ismail's hostility to Nubar, i. 67-8
  his disagreement with Sir R. Wilson, i. 95
  succeeded by Sir Frank Lascelles, i. 96

Waddington, M., i. 36
Wakfs, the, i. 53, ii. 409
Wallace, Sir Donald Mackenzie, i. 324
Walne, Mr., on Said's policy, i. 21
Weighing dues, i. 122
West, Sir Raymond, ii. 288
Wilson, Sir Charles W., i. 368, ii. 8
Wilson, Sir Rivers—
  Vice-President of Commission of Inquiry, i. 45
  appointed Minister of Finance, i. 63
  assaulted by officers, i. 74
  on reinstatement of Nubar, i. 88
  his disagreement with Lord Vivian, i. 95
  President of Commission of Liquidation, i. 162
  references to, i. 78-9, 88, 91-6-8, 100-2-3, 172
Wingate, Sir Reginald—
  on withdrawn Soudan garrisons, ii. 31
  Sirdar, ii. 105
  on Soudan, ii. 545-6, 554
  reference to, ii. 66-8, 70
Wodehouse, Colonel, ii. 67
Wolff, Sir Henry, Convention with Turkey, ii. 372-81
Wolseley, Lord, i. 301, 323, 581
  marches to relieve Gordon, ii. 5
  correspondence with British

Government after fall of Khartoum, ii. 20-29
Women, Egyptian, importance of educating, ii. 539-42
Wood, Sir Evelyn, commands Egyptian army, i. 372, 399
  on evacuation of Soudan, i. 376-7
  references to, i. 422, 548

Young Egypt, ii. 228-43

Zeyla—
  farmed to Ismail, ii. 53
  taken by Great Britain, ii. 54
Zobeir Pasha—
  proposed despatch to Soudan, i. 402
  his relations with Gordon, i. 454-60
  on proposed appointment in Soudan, i. 480-534
  his return to Soudan, i. 529

**THE END**

Printed in the United States of America.

THE following pages contain advertisements of a few of the new Macmillan books on kindred subjects.

# Japanese Expansion and American Policies

By J. F. ABBOTT

Of Washington University

*Cloth, 12mo, $1.50*

Here Professor Abbott sums up dispassionately and impartially the history of the diplomatic and social relations of Japan with the United States, and in particular gives the facts that will enable an American to form his own opinion as to the possibility of future conflicts between these two countries. The work is neither pro-Japan nor anti-Japan, but seeks, rather, to present the case justly. The author emphasizes the importance of an intelligent understanding of the subject, believing that in spite of the present lull owing to acute interest in European affairs, it is yet a problem that will periodically and persistently come to the fore until it is satisfactorily solved. Professor Abbott has given careful study to Far Eastern matters for the past fifteen years, has traveled at various times throughout the Orient and previous to the Russian War was an instructor in the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy.

---

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

**Publishers** **64-66 Fifth Avenue** **New York**

# A Short History of Germany

By ERNEST F. HENDERSON

Two Volumes. New Edition. With a New Preface and Three New Chapters

*Cloth, 8vo*

"In our opinion, for the English reader, there is no more admirable contribution to the history of Germany as a whole than in these volumes. The excellence of the text lies in its apparent freedom from prejudice. Furthermore, on a thorough examination of original documents and sources, we find here the great figures in German history painted as we must believe they really were. They have been described by one who brings to his work a signal freshness, buoyancy and vivacity, crowning his past labors as an investigator. Dr. Henderson's style is vital in the best sense."

It is the *Outlook* which thus commends an earlier edition of this standard work, a commendation which has been heartily endorsed by all students of history as well as by the general public. To his previous chapters the author has now added three new ones which bring the text down to the period prior to the beginning of the present war.

---

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

**Publishers** **64-66 Fifth Avenue** **New York**

# Travels in the American Colonies, 1690–1783

By NEWTON D. MERENESS

*Cloth, 8vo*

This book consists of eighteen hitherto unpublished narratives, some written originally in English, others being translations from the French or German. They give accounts of travel on the Atlantic slope from Savannah to Albany; from Albany to Niagara Falls, Quebec, Hartford and Boston; through the Great Lakes from Detroit to Chicago; up the Mississippi from New Orleans to St. Louis; down the Ohio and the Mississippi from Pittsburg to New Orleans; up the Tennessee; through the country of the Choctaws, the Creeks and the Cherokees and through the backwoods from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. The traveler, usually an officer, is either on a tour of observation and inspection, or is attending to some other important business. In one instance a party of immigrants is removing to a new home in the wilderness.

---

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

**Publishers 64-66 Fifth Avenue New York**

## The Life of Andrew Jackson

By JOHN SPENCER BASSETT, Ph.D.

With Illustrations. New Edition. Two Volumes in One

*Cloth, 8vo, $2.50*

This is a one-volume edition of a biography that has, since its first publication several years ago, come to be regarded as one of the most faithful stories of Jackson's life and of its effect on the nation that has ever been written. Professor Bassett has not slighted Jackson's failings or his virtues; he has tried to refrain from commenting upon his actions; he has sought to present a true picture of the political manipulations which surrounded Jackson and in which he was an important factor. The volume contributes largely to a clearer realization not only of the character of a great man but also of the complex period in which he lived.

## The Writings of John Quincy Adams

Volume VI. Edited by

WORTHINGTON C. FORD

*Cloth, 8vo*

This volume brings Mr. Ford's remarkable series up to the year 1821. Mr. Adams's last dispatches from London, while minister there, deal with the matters left undetermined by the Treaty of Ghent and with his association with the English reformers of the day.

---

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

**Publishers 64-66 Fifth Avenue New York**

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A A 001 426 212 5

DT107
C76

UNIVERSITY OF CA RIVERSIDE LIBRARY
3 1210 02001 6398